A FREE UNION?: THE SEXUAL POLITICS OF PROGRESSIVE-ERA SOCIALIST NOVELS

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A FREE UNION?: THE SEXUAL POLITICS OF PROGRESSIVE-ERA SOCIALIST NOVELS

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"A Free Union?" is the first comprehensive critical study of novels written by members of the Socialist Party of America (SP) from 1901 to 1917. Published mostly by mainstream presses at the height of the Party's public influence, this set of novels predates the formal theorization of a coherent radical aesthetic but offers an apt case study of the profound interplay between radical and popular imaginaries in the early twentieth-century U.S. While critics often dismiss the politics and literature of the early SP as hopelessly inconsistent, "A Free Union?" asserts that their radical potential lies precisely in their accommodation of ideological and aesthetic diversity.

Specifically, this study focuses on the dynamic intersections of sexual, political, and economic discourses in SP novels, tracing their influences on ongoing debates about Party theory and strategy as well as on public understandings of sexuality. The SP, with its patriotic and electoral orientations, often posed socialism as the means for the final achievement of a "more perfect union." Hence, "A Free Union?" invokes the multiple forms of purportedly voluntary and legal unions—conjugal, economic, and political—that factor into this nationalistic socialist imaginary as well as the metaphorical and discursive overlaps among them. Contending that popular SP novels offered a unique site for interrogating and imagining alternatives to such unions, this project likewise interrogates the ideological ramifications of the means and ends of socioeconomic transformation posed by and figured in these narratives.

Starting with the predominant genre of the socialist marriage plot, the chapters consider the ways in which the conventions of both popular culture and socialist theory are taken up and revised by subsequent novels that foreground evolutionary tropes, prostitution, and free love. In doing so, this project argues for seeing gender, sexuality, and literature—all of which tended to be marginalized in official Party politics—as key arenas in which contemporary understandings of socialism were being contested and articulated. "A Free Union?" further concludes that socialist novelists produced innovations in literary and sexual representation that ultimately challenged authoritarian and orthodox modes of socialism in favor of more feminist and dialectical models.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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I. INTRODUCTION: A FREE UNION?: THE SEXUAL POLITICS OF U.S. SOCIALISTS' NOVELS, 1901-1917

"[T]he dull, purblind folly of the very rich men…and the corruption in business and politics, have tended to produce a very unhealthy condition of excitement and irritation in the popular mind, which shows itself in part in the enormous increase in the socialistic propaganda. Nothing effective, because nothing at once honest and intelligent, is being done to combat the great amount of evil which, mixed with a little good, a little truth, is contained in the outpourings of the *Cosmopolitan*, of *McClure's*, of *Collier's*, of Tom Lawson, of David Graham Phillips, of Upton Sinclair. Some of these are socialists; some of them merely lurid sensationalists; but they are all building up a revolutionary feeling which will most probably take the form of a political campaign." - Theodore Roosevelt in1906[1]

"Perhaps the most important symptom of the progress of Socialism in America is the flood of Socialist books which are pouring from the presses nowadays—books written by native-born Americans and dealing with American questions from American points of view. Not the least important among these are the works of fiction, for the novel has nowadays become a battlefield, where the questions of the time are fought out. Personally, I think a good Socialist novel is the best tool one can use to open the minds of the average non-Socialist, and so I watch with interest the appearance of Socialist or semi-Socialist fiction." - Upton Sinclair in 1911[2]

In Richard Hofstadter's influential history of turn-of-the-century America, *The Age of Reform* (1955), he acknowledges in passing that "the moral and intellectual leverage exerted by the Socialist Party and Socialist ideas in the Progressive era has never been sufficiently recognized" (98). Indeed, in the opening years of the twentieth century, when "modern America was really born," socialism had become a significant part of public discourse, reflecting and commenting upon the surge of wide-scale socioeconomic changes that "set society hurtling towards an

1 This is a quote from a March 15, 1906 letter written to Secretary William Taft, encouraging him to run as the Republican candidate for President. It was later printed in *The Independent* among other newspapers in the lead up to the 1908 election: LXV, no. 3125 (Oct. 22, 1908): 915.

2 This quote is taken from Sinclair's 1911 review of George Cram Cook's *The Chasm.* See "Socialist Fiction" in *Wilshire's Magazine*, XV (Feb., 1911): 4.

uncertain future" (Piott xi). Rapid industrialization, corporatization, and urbanization, for instance, were spawning huge factories, huge trusts, and huge cities. New technologies were modernizing and connecting industries and cities to an unprecedented degree while a massive wave of over fifteen million new immigrants was arriving to help people them. As workers, women, and African Americans engaged in collective struggles against exploitation and oppression at home, the U.S. launched imperial projects abroad, creating new horizons for exploitation through its occupation of former Spanish colonies. Amidst these tumultuous material transformations, reform and radical movements sprung up to resist and regulate this "newly interdependent corporate society" (Wilson 1). The Socialist Party of America (SP) was one such Progressive-era anti-capitalist movement. Established in 1901, the Party reached its zenith—in terms of its membership, percentage of the popular vote, number of elected officials, and cultural influence—eleven years later in 1912.[3] The noteworthy (though comparatively moderate overall) successes of the Party in this era have been well-documented by historians such as James Weinstein, David Shannon, Aileen Kraditor, and Paul and Mari Jo Buhle, but thus far there has been no comprehensive attempt to analyze "the moral and intellectual leverage exerted" by the impressive volume of literature produced by its adherents.

If the epigraphs from Roosevelt and Sinclair alternately manifest the genuine threat and promise of the spread of socialism in the United States, both of them explicitly tie its propagation to an accelerating socialist literary production enabled by the "explosive growth of [the nation's] mass media" (Conn 1). Roosevelt casts socialist literature as both the symptom

3 Locating the SP as the heart of pre-1920 radicalism, labor historian James Weinstein sums up its numerical achievements as follows: "During the decade ending with 1912, the SP enjoyed continuous growth and exerted a wide impact upon the political life of the nation. Starting with 10,000 members in 1901, the Party had grown to 118,000 by 1912, had elected some 1,200 public officials throughout the U.S., and was publishing over 300 periodicals of all kinds" (27). Indicating their broader cultural appeal, in the 1912 presidential election, the SP's candidate, Eugene V. Debs received nearly 900,000 votes or almost six percent of the total, which far exceeded their official membership (Kraditor 13).

(since the condition "shows itself" in the proliferation of radical texts) *and* the primary cause (since the same texts are "building up" the condition) of infectious "revolutionary feeling" in the "popular mind." Similarly, Sinclair sees socialist literature as "the most important symptom of the progress of Socialism in America" and fiction in particular as the surest means for garnering public support for the cause. Given the Party's stresses on popular education, gradual social transformation through electoral politics, and "boring from within" existing institutions as the keystones of their political tactics, it is not surprising that members of the SP—in sharp contrast to the members of other contemporary radical movements[4]—produced many novels. Since many of them trusted, as the SP's perennial presidential nominee Eugene V. Debs did, that "[i]gnorance alone [stood] in the way of Socialist success," their efforts were driven by education (quoted in Currie 67). As the mass literary market had "finally achieved a fully national reach," it provided the surest means to advance the SP's pedagogical efforts (Wilson 2). Accordingly, most Party leaders (Bill Haywood excluded) were prolific writers who sought to "make readers" out of the public, for they "firmly believe[d] that if they [could] get a man to reading books upon Socialism, even anti-Socialistic books, he [was] as good as converted."[5]

Upton Sinclair's particular faith in novels as the best recruitment tools was no doubt influenced by the enormous, unexpected successes of previous U.S. novels affiliated with radical causes such as Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1888), and his own bestseller, *The Jungle* (1906). Indeed, during an era that saw the

4 The Socialist Labor Party's more doctrinaire and revolutionary orientation corresponded with its members' almost exclusively nonfictional literary production. Anarchists seem to have stuck mostly to poetry, nonfiction, and autobiography. Authors affiliated with The International Workers of the World likewise wrote almost no novels though they produced droves of poems, songs, comics, and other popular art. The I.W.W.'s literary and artistic production speaks to the itinerant nature of the movement along with its appeal primarily to workers and stress on direct action and democracy in the workplace.

5 See Weinstein, 79. The quote is taken from Reginald Wright Kauffman's 1910 tract, *What is Socialism?* (174).

emergence of the more "vigorously realistic," journalistic, and political ideal of literature[6] denigrated by Roosevelt, socialists like Sinclair and Jack London were among the biggest literary celebrities of the day and Party members produced quite a few bestselling novels.[7] And yet, in spite of (or perhaps due to) its popularity, this body of literature has been largely overlooked in histories of American literature and American literary radicalism alike.[8] The novels' participation in conservative aesthetic and social discourses make them easy for critics to write off in advance as artistic *and* political failures.[9] Thus, if SP novels were initially suppressed from cultural memory for being too radical, from our "contemporary horizon of expectations," they may seem not radical enough to merit reconsideration (Tate 19).[10]

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6 See Wilson, *The Labor of Words*, 1, 17.

7 In his study of the professionalization of authorship in the Progressive era, Christopher Wilson counts socialists as principle figures in the "literary vanguard" of "the mass media marketplace," "which gave so much of [the era's] cultural ferment shape and direction" (Wilson 1-2). Besides *The Jungle*, practically everything that London wrote reached bestseller status. Other SP bestsellers include I.K. Friedman's *By Bread Alone*, Reginald Wright Kauffman's *The House of Bondage*, Arthur Bullard's *Comrade Yetta*, Ernest Poole's *The Harbor*, and Elias Tobekin's *Witte Arrives*.

8 Originally suppressed during the first wave of the Red Scare in 1917, these novels have yet to be recovered even by literary critics on the Left, presumably due to their sexist, racist, and even classist tendencies—hardly a legacy the Left is eager to reclaim. The traditional histories of radical literature in the U.S. frequently skim over or ignore this body of literature. Daniel Aaron, James Gilbert, and Eric Homberger all see the founding of *The Masses* or the rise of the Communist Party of the United States as the true starting point of American literary radicalism. The exception is Walter Rideout who devotes the first three chapters of *The Radical Novel in the United States, 1900-1954* to these novels.

9 Peter Conn even ventures to pin the failure of socialism in America on "the transformations inflicted upon socialist ideology by many of its most influential literary proponents" (93) while Rideout's final assessment of SP novelists hinges on how their "failure to produce art precludes conviction of truth" (85). Following Rideout's lead, overtly political literature in often discounted for its presumed aesthetic inferiority. Jaime Harker responds to this common critical allegation in her examination of female reformist literature of the era, noting how "formal innovation and progressive politics…aren't inextricably linked," and, moreover, how political authors often wrote in conventional styles on purpose, creating "middlebrow literature…by design, not be default" (15, 18).

10 A number of important landmark recovery projects by scholars such as Barbara Foley, Paula Rabinowitz, Alan Wald, Cary Nelson, Bill Mullen, and Robert Shulman have brought considerable attention to radical literature of the 1930s in the U.S. This body of literature has the distinction of being both more explicit in its political implications and more experimental in its aesthetics.

Recent work by scholars such as Daniel Bender, Sylvia Cooke, Laura Hapke, Christophe Den Tandt, Mark Van Wienen, and William Scott has begun to address this critical oversight.[11] Though this new criticism offers many important insights into particular authors or novels from among this body of materials, there is of yet no work that treats Progressive-era socialist novels comprehensively as a phenomenon worth studying in itself. "A Free Union" takes up this hitherto neglected field, addressing about sixty novels written by members of the SP during the Progressive era synthetically. In doing so, this project seeks to both re-evaluate the (lesser-known) work of some canonical authors like Sinclair, London, and Susan Glaspell and call attention to the writing of those authors whose work has been largely forgotten such as I.K. Friedman, Charlotte Teller, James Oppenheim, Theresa Malkiel, and Arthur Bullard.

While the exact timeframe of the Progressive period has been understood in a variety of ways, for the purpose of this study, the historical boundaries are set from 1901 to 1917, the years that mark the foundation of the Socialist Party of America (the SP) and the U.S. entry into World War I respectively. The latter is a logical stopping point as WWI set off the systematic suppression of the Party and its literature by a government fearful of the effects of the Russian Revolution.[12] Furthermore, the SP's official adoption of an antiwar stance led to the defection of many of its novelists and public intellectuals and divided its ranks internally, divisions and setbacks which were exacerbated by the eventual formation of the Communist

11 Hapke, Cooke, and Scott examine representations of labor in U.S. novels from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, focusing on the worker, woman worker, and mass worker respectively. DenTandt's work is on naturalism and the urban sublime, Bender's on Progressive-era novels and evolutionary theory. Only Van Wienen's work concentrates specifically on socialism and socialist authors, using Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Upton Sinclair, and W.E.B. DuBois as historiographic case studies to examine the interplay between various strands of turn-of-the-century socialist thought and its intersections with Bellamy's Nationalism, feminism, and Black Nationalism.

12 Immediately following the 1917 Revolution, the "Red Scare" began in the U.S. Fearing the spread of revolutionary fervor, the Federal Government took steps to smother the nation's radical movements with tactics such as the Palmer Raids and The Espionage and Sedition Acts of 1917 and 1918 respectively.

Party of the United States (CP) in 1919. The changing cultural climate and global context of socialist movements following WWI created a more formal relationship between Party politics and writers that demanded, among other things, the authorization of a singular, standard Party press and the explicit theorization of a coherent radical aesthetic.

By comparison, pre-war socialist literature is of worthy of notice due to the very diversity of its theoretical and aesthetic preoccupations as well as the variety of contexts for its production and reception. Such diversity was informally in line with the policies and organization of the early SP with its coalition-style politics that conscientiously accommodated a range of ideological commitments. The Party's nonprescriptive relationship to the literary production and consumption of its members also reinforced its heterogeneity. At the height of Party enrollment in 1912, there were as many as 323 socialist periodicals, none of which could claim to authoritatively speak for the Party because the SP's constitution enforced a rule that their National Committee would "neither publish nor designate any official organ" (Rideout 98). The genre of the novel itself—characterized by the coexistence of multiple voices—resonated with this open, democratic structure of the Party that encouraged the incorporation of competing theories and strategies, a diversity that many members saw as productive rather than obstructive to their radical projects.[13]

However, whereas the critical precedent is to see the literary quality of radical literature as compromised by its simplistic adherence to a narrow party line, socialist novels of the Progressive era have frequently been dismissed as worthy objects of study for their foolish inconsistency with the same. In retrospect, historians of the Party, critics of its literature, and

13 In Jesse Wallace Hughan's 1911 study of the Party, for instance, she dismissed the common perception of the SP as a battlefield with opposing right and left camps, preferring to describe the range of views as "a gradual shading from revolutionists… to constructivists," with many groupings and alliances in between whose attributes were "seldom exact and always changing," and "whose members indulge[d] in mutual criticism" (221).

even its own adherents have tended to see this diversity as a weakness leading to crippling inconsistency. For instance, historian Paul Buhle discusses how the early SP has been characterized as a "freakish conglomerate" without sufficient militancy or theoretical sophistication (16), while Gilbert describes the novels associated with it as variously "vague," "diverse," "eclectic," "ill-defined," and "disorganized" (10-11). Even writers who remained committed to radical politics after WWI, perhaps discouraged by their own failure to bring the revolution to America, dismissed the preceding era as lacking in political seriousness. As Genevieve Taggard said in an introduction to a collection of poetry from *The Masses*, "The age hadn't come to grips with anything much more serious than the problems of rancid meat. Even the I.W.W. and the extreme left wing of the revolutionary movement shared the verbosity and romanticism of the time. Everybody was playing" (quoted in Gilbert 38-39). More recently, Peter Conn has criticized early SP novels for their tendency to "simplify," "subordinate," "suppress," and even contradict socialist ideology through their lack of theoretical rigor and adherence to mainstream aesthetics and ideals (83).

Embedded in Conn's critique is the assumption that political novels are vehicles for a static, coherent ideology instead of actively engaged in making and remaking ideologies themselves as they are written and read over time. Hence, critics such as Conn tend to read for a particular socialist doctrine, an interpretive strategy which greatly exaggerates the SP's ideological stability, while shutting down alternative readings and political possibilities that the novel form and the "open democratic structure" of the early SP tried to keep admissible. By contrast, "A Free Union" approaches these novels as meaningful rather than laughable sites of contestation, assuming with Michael Tratner that "the more powerfully something is 'actually happening' to change the social order, the more there will be conflicting visions of it" (11). Consequently, this study does not overlook the productive potential of multiplicity,

inconsistency, and incoherence within the SP or its literature. Instead it asks how the Party's "wide range of doctrinal and ideological views and tendencies" might have in fact enabled it to spread "its roots widely" and reach "into many parts of the country and into areas of American life never since affected by openly socialist ideas" (2).[14]

Though the genre of the novel was compatible with the SP's political organization and tactics in many ways, this is not to say that novels or novelists were explicitly discussed as part of official Party strategy. Unlike the CP, the SP did not have anything akin to Writers' Congresses, and their committees for propaganda stuck exclusively to nonfictional materials. Socialist presses only rarely published novels written by Party members and socialist periodicals only rarely serialized or reviewed them. Instead, most SP novels were popular fiction published by mainstream presses and aimed at mainstream audiences. They were generally conventional in their generic and stylistic orientations, characterized by a "familiar embrace of adventure and romance," that was, to use Harker's formulation, "by design rather than by default" (Conn 93, Harker 18). While, as Herbert Gutman points out, the adoption and adaptation of popular morality is a "logical process of legitimation," the act of popularizing something (be it science, aesthetics, or politics) often carries with it the implications of a simplified or feminized (re)production. If Sinclair is enthusiastic about novels serving as a "tool" for "open[ing] the minds of the average non-Socialist," this phrasing still suggests the gendered and unidirectional relationship of their pedagogies. However, if at first the novels and the topics they address might seem to be marginal to official socialist politics, this study contends that these texts exerted "moral and intellectual leverage" not only on the public but also within the Party, taking an active part in shaping socialist theory and strategy.

14 The coalition style politics of the SP in the U.S. was not unlike the global movement at the time. Kolakowski has referred to The Second International (1889 – 1914) as a "golden age" for Marxism because it was visible but not yet "rigidly codified" (355).

In this light, the particular abundance of domestic fiction produced by SP novelists can be seen as a choice that did not merely pander to a popular audience but also reflected the theoretical concerns of its authors. The early SP tended towards a more patriotic orientation than its radical successors, and the novels produced by its members reflect this nationalistic bent, fulfilling Sinclair's call for books "written by native-born Americans and dealing with American questions from American points of view." Like other "homegrown" radical movements before it, the SP was "grounded in American moral traditions" and often aimed at "reaffirming and extending the ambition of republican citizenship" rather than fundamentally challenging its foundations (Paul Buhle 11, 14). Socialism, then, was frequently understood as simply the full realization of established American political ideals, the final achievement of a "more perfect union." Hence, the reference in the title of this dissertation to "a free union" is intended to evoke the multiple forms of (supposedly) voluntary and legal unions—conjugal, economic, and political—that factor into this nationalistic socialist imaginary as well as the metaphorical and discursive overlaps among them. The phrase is posed as a question to reflect how SP novels served to interrogate such unions from within and without. In this light, socialists wrote novels both in order to put into question America's status as a "free union" and in turn to question how—through other unions—they might work to transform it into a "more perfect" one. This project is likewise an inquiry, attentive to the ideological ramifications of the tentative solutions and alternatives posed by and figured in these narratives. To be sure, not all unions are "created equal" according to their representation in socialist novels in two respects. Firstly, the unions that SP novels imagine do not consistently model a "free," democratic, or egalitarian alternative to American capitalist plutocracy. Secondly, the ways in which various unions are represented and endorsed are lopsided in unexpected ways. Indeed,

the bulk of SP novels suggest that the realization of the cooperative commonwealth would result as much if not more from marital unions than from labor unions.

The novels' disproportionate focus on romance and domesticity (as opposed to work, political campaigns, strikes, etc) might at first seem surprising at a time when women accounted for only a slight percentage of Party membership, a statistic that Aileen Kraditor sees as evidence that its predominantly male membership "did not consider socialism relevant to what went on in the home" and "believed socialism had to do only with the public sphere" (197). Paula Rabinowitz notes how in the standard "psychological narrative of domesticity, gender supplants class" (15), which for socialist domestic fiction means highlighting a social category (gender) and constituency (women) that the Party was initially wary of directly addressing. As in the case of novels, gender and sexuality did not factor significantly into official Party politics, which tried to emphasize first and foremost the "big picture" of class struggle. However, though gender and sexuality were marginalized in SP propaganda[15], SP domestic fiction evidences how they were nevertheless central to the rhetorical underpinnings, on-the-ground practices, and public perception of radical movements. Domestic and sexual issues were indeed decidedly central to broader popular opinions of and debates about socialism during the Progressive era. As Josephine Conger-Kaneko astutely observed, "'Home' has always been referred to as an abiding place of bliss and comfort and gentle content. 'Breaking up the home,' is the black anathema that has always been cast at any movement for the

15 As an illustration, Charles H. Kerr, editor and publisher of *The International Socialist Review* and founder of the most prolific socialist press of the Progressive era (Charles H. Kerr & Company of Chicago), put out a lengthy illustrated pamphlet every year from 1900 on that was eventually authorized by the Socialist Party of America, entitled "What to Read on Socialism" (Ruff 95-96). The extensive catalog of 1910 contains nearly 200 texts, only six of which are novels and only fourteen of which (including five of the novels) overtly relate to the status of women and the home. Additionally, the advertisements in the back of most of the pamphlets and volumes put out by Charles H. Kerr & Company generally contain a page which displays a list of thirteen cheap and essential socialist texts for the beginning student of socialism, none of which deal with women or the home. Ads for books that do concern domestic issues appear only at the back of texts that deal primarily with those issues.

advancement of society in which women were included" (22).[16] Like today, sexual scandals involving Party members were widely publicized as a means to discredit their politics.[17] And, on the other hand, SP political campaigns (against Party directives to keep marriage and religion off the platform) often provided conservative counters to such attacks by more rigorously stressing "family values" and alleging the sexual immorality of their opponents (Mari Jo Buhle 252). The focus on domesticity in the novels reveals its imbrications with socialist politics, implying how those politics were shaped by "the current preoccupations of the American public" in problematic and progressive ways (Rideout 68).

Nationally, issues related to women, gender, and sexuality were looming large in public discourse. The dramatic expansions corporate capitalism and its attendant social transformations were seen as destabilizing traditional family life, an anxiety verified by women's increasing visibility in the public sphere through their growing presence in the workplace, higher education, and political campaigns (Simmons 4). Women both led and were the subject of multiple reform movements that traversed the spectrum of radical and traditional values, including the Suffrage, Temperance, Social Hygiene, Antiprostitution, and Birth Control campaigns—all of which socialists took an active part in. Moreover, the popularization of evolutionary theory and institutionalization of social sciences like sociology, anthropology, and sexology that explicitly informed SP propaganda also brought discussions of sexuality back into popular culture, informing a "developing concept" of private identity with "the sexual at its center" (Simmons 7). Rhetorically and practically, then, socialist class politics and public understandings of gender and sexuality were mutually informing categories. Thus, SP novels

16 From "Woman's Slavery: Her Road to Freedom" (Chicago: The Progressive Woman Publishing Co, 1911).

17 Socialists were widely believed to practice "free love," and George Herron, Jack London, and Upton Sinclair all endured extreme media scrutiny for their divorces.

explicitly challenge the historical distinctions between public and private spheres that Kraditor assumes inhered in SP politics and that the subsequent work of feminist scholars such as Nancy Armstrong and Paula Rabinowitz has effectively undermined. While Rabinowitz traces the keen awareness of the "interpenetration of both spheres" exclusively in women's writing, this project shows that radical male novelists were also deeply attuned to how "the cultural work of the two spheres is mutually affirming" (Rabinowitz *3*).

Likewise, counter to Kraditor's assertion that gender was a "nondefining" issue for the Party based on its notable absence from official proclamations, an analysis of SP domestic fiction shows not only the decided prominence of the category in socialist thought but also that the very ambiguity surrounding conceptions of gender in the Party ultimately led to its being a central site for ongoing negotiations of a socialist theory and strategy that were significantly in process. Thus, SP novels also vividly anticipate the critical concerns of cultural studies in that their rhetorics of class not only destabilize orthodox Marxist understandings of the category but also amplify their intersections with other cultural categories, which is not to say that their explicit projection of such intersections necessarily progressive. In SP novels, class and politics are gendered, sexualized, and racialized in uneven ways that reveal the (often hegemonic) assumptions that underlie their radical imaginaries.

Consequently, the unions at the core of SP novels often manifest both enthusiasm and anxiety about their own emancipatory projects. Notably, women's relationship to the many forms of voluntary legal "unions" implied in the title of this project were in serious flux during the Progressive era, as women fought for sexual, economic, and political equality, participating in struggles to bring about modern marriage, industrial democracy, and universal suffrage. As historian Christine Stansell points out, "[t]he [social] innovations of the moment benefited all, but they were thought particularly to aid women," who were finally beginning "to break a long

taboo against female sexual expression" as well as "to share literary, [economic and political] enterprises monopolized by men" (225). SP novels take advantage of women's perceived social "momentum" to advance their own "programs for cultural regeneration," but this symbolic deployment often registered latent anxieties about the means to and results of working-class and female emancipation (Stansell 225). James Oppenheim's depiction of the factory worker and labor leader Sally Heffer in *The Nine-Tenths* (1911) offers a fascinating example of such dual enthusiasm and doubt about the realization of fully egalitarian and democratic free unions. The narrative records the militant and charismatic Sally catalyzing a wildcat strike in a scene with distinct matrimonial overtones: "Sally marched *down the aisle./* 'Follow me, girls! We're going to have a union!'" (my emphasis 200). However, in spite of her "perfect comradeship," Sally fails to achieve success in either a domestic or industrial union when the novel's hero rejects her as the strike founders. Oppeheim's novel, then, explicitly poses Sally as "a woman of the future" who might help bring about "a finer and freer union," but denies her every opportunity to do so (289).

By attending to such incoherence in this overlooked archive, "A Free Union" demonstrates how these novels provide an important resource for thinking through problematics that remain vital to feminist-socialist thought of today. Indeed, the frustrating incoherence of these novels can be seen as a product of their serious engagement with working through the thorny and multifaceted relationships between bodies, economics, and politics. If in 1977 economist Heidi Hartmann famously referred to attempts to practically and theoretically integrate Marxism and feminism as an "unhappy marriage" that needed to strive for a "more progressive union" (2, 29), such a contentious "union" was already being theorized in the early SP and its novels long before the 1970s feminist movement reinvigorated the uneasy liaison between the two.

As scholars such as Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner have pointed out, matters of sexuality have historically loomed large in our national political imaginary—informing, mediating, and obstructing other public policy issues. "A Free Union" investigates one instance of this problematic from the perspective of radical movements, examining how sexual representations in socialist literature enable and constrain efforts to imagine political alternatives. Indeed, if the "Woman Question" and the "Sex Problem" could be ignored at Party conventions and minimized in its propaganda, they could not be so easily overlooked in its novels. In them, sexual representations are the primary the sites for imagining the means to and ends of radical socioeconomic transformation.[18]

Starting with an analysis of a set of highly popular socialist marriage plots, "A Free Union" considers the ways in which the conventions of both mainstream literature and socialist theory of the Progressive era are taken up and revised by novels that foreground evolutionary tropes, white slave narratives, and feminist-realist alternatives to the courtship story. Each chapter identifies prominent trends in socialist thought while attending to its inherent multiplicity. In distinguishing among lines of thought, I have invoked the Party's own internal distinctions between its right and left wings, but also deployed the terms "orthodox" versus "dialectical" to characterize certain ideological trends. By "orthodox," I refer to strains of thought that tended towards deterministic and structuralist understandings of socialism that privileged the economy as the ultimate basis of society and of all legitimate struggles to change it. By contrast, "dialectical" strains of thought tended to see economic and cultural practices as

18 My work on the sexual politics of socialist novels is informed by complementary scholarship on turn-of-the-century African American domestic fiction, for instance, by Hazel Carby, Claudia Tate, and Ann DuCille that convincingly argues for the radical political potential of black novelists' appropriation of popular courtship story conventions. I am also influenced by Jamie Harker's and Dale Bauer's studies of female writers from the era that focus on the intersections of novels with middlebrow reform and sexual expression respectively.

mutually-informing, not necessarily seeing class as the key for explaining all other forms of social oppression.

The sexual tropes addressed in each chapter comment upon, intervene in, and ultimately help shape these ongoing debates about the means to achieving (and ideal ends of) socialism. Each chapter also puts a prominent sexual trope in conversation with a particular historical moment and/or related set of cultural discourses. The first chapter examines socialist marriage plots in tandem with the formation of the SP following a series of violent and devastating labor uprisings that resulted in considerable losses for workers. In juxtaposing successful cross-class romances with failed strikes in their narratives, these novels use marriage to signal the right-wing SP's investment in class cooperation and electoral politics (as opposed to class struggle and direct industrial action) as the primary means for social change. The second chapter examines romances underwritten by prevailing discourses of natural and social sciences. Foregrounding the evolutionary and eugenic themes that informed early "scientific" socialism in the U.S., these novels variously support and refute the figuration of socialism as a result of (Anglo-Saxon) racial fitness rather than of class struggle. The novels addressed in these first two chapters, then, tend to manifest anxieties about the exploited and oppressed classes that are theoretically the ideal constituency and revolutionary subjects of socialism: the working class, women, immigrants, ethnic others, and African Americans. In their desire to maintain racial and sexual status quos, they imagine a benevolent authoritarian socialism ushered in and run by white professional men.

The third chapter analyzes these anxieties in socialist fiction inspired by the White Slavery Scare, especially Reginald Wright Kauffman's bestseller, *The House of Bondage* (1910). SP prostitution narratives, through their attempts to articulate salient and ambivalent connections between prostitutes, wives, and workers, ultimately called into question the

relationship between economic and sexual categories, class and sexual struggle. In doing so, they laid the groundwork for a more dialectical understanding of socialist theory and strategy. The fourth chapter turns to pre-war novels written by Arthur Bullard and Upton Sinclair that participate in and critique the feminist socialism rooted in (female) sexual emancipation and artistic expression pioneered by the bohemian intellectuals of Greenwich Village. These novels self-consciously test the relationship between sexual, economic, and political emancipation. Laying claim to sexuality and literature as sites for socioeconomic transformation, Bullard's and Sinclair's work challenges some of the socially-conservative, deterministic, and scientific tendencies of orthodox socialism.

The policies and strategies of SP in relationship to gender did indeed tangibly change between the first and second decades of the twentieth century, at least partially heeding to Eugene V. Deb's bold assertion that "an aroused, enfranchised, enlightened womanhood will ultimately sweep into oblivion every agency of human oppression that today block the way to the emancipation of the race" (quoted in Currie 106).[19] Deb's proclamation in fact marked the first International Women's Day in 1909, which was pioneered by American socialists. By 1912, women compromised up to fifteen percent of Party membership, served as secretaries of six state organizations and 158 locals, and had appointed staff in sixteen states to coordinative women's activities (Mari Jo Buhle 160).

"A Free Union" thus argues for seeing gender, sexuality, and literature—all of which initially played insignificant roles in the official politics of the SP at the time—as key arenas in

19 Eugene V. Debs, besides being the SP's candidate for president throughout the Progressive era, was also the perennial keynote speaker at the biggest International Women's Day (IWD) demonstration in New York. The first IWD was actually decreed by the SP itself in 1909 before American socialists' efforts led to its adoption by the global movement at the International Conference of Socialist Women at Copenhagen in 1910. Though it might seem counterintuitive to feature Debs as the speaker, one of the primary aims of IWD was to encourage male socialists to support and participate in movements dedicated to women's suffrage (Gold 100).

which contemporary understandings of socialism were being contested and articulated, and in ways that ultimately challenged authoritarian and orthodox modes of socialism in favor of more feminist and dialectical models.

The organization of this project and the historicizing narrative that underlies it runs the risk of replicating the very linear, teleological models of progress that it critiques. Its account of SP novels does in some ways suggest the increasingly progressive formal practices and theoretical implications of their sexual politics. This triumphant narrative is qualified and balanced throughout by a continual attention to the possibilities and limitations of any aesthetic or ideological configuration. Not only does "A Free Union" stress the partial and uneven nature of the types of transitions and transformations that I trace in political and sexual discourses, it makes no claim that those who imagined more feminist and dialectical models of socialism finally got socialist theory and strategy "right."

For a variety of reasons, therefore, the last chapter of this dissertation is hardly the end of the story. The recursivity and contingency of these aesthetics and politics-in-process is seen in how the feminist-socialist positions tentatively articulated in the literature of 1910s were quickly vacated by the very authors who helped shape them, only to be soon eclipsed by "big picture" communist and world-war politics. Moreover, the endpoint of this study marks the collapse rather than triumph of the SP, heralded by the dramatic decline and fragmentation of the Party, its eventual attempts to purge the ideological diversity that informed its initial policy and organization, and the radical recoil of many of its novelists who either returned to Two-Party politics or shunned them altogether. These discouraging political outcomes and backlashes should not be seen only as failures on the Party's part to realize the promise of a more progressive and poststructuralist model of politics, that is, a dynamic, coalition-style politics that incorporates a diversity of democratic struggles and strategies while recognizing

the basic equivalence of all such struggles.[20] They also illustrate the earnest difficulties of putting this vision of radical politics, anticipated in their novels, into practice.

In spite of this seemingly pessimistic assessment, these texts nevertheless represent a chapter in American literary and social history that is well worth reconsidering. If the socioeconomic alternatives to capitalism that SP novelists imagined were impracticable, inconclusive, or problematic, it is still valuable to examine the conditions that enabled or foreclosed upon their imagining alternatives at all.

In a 2011 reflection inspired by the Occupy Wall Street movement, journalist Matt Taibbi remarks that "modern America has become a place so drearily confining and predictable" that it obstructs the freedom or desire "to imagine a better and more beautiful future." In terms redolent of critical dismissals of SP novels, the Occupy movement has been derided as confused, inconsistent, and contradictory in politics—allegations, that Taibbi argues, considerably miss the point. Instead, he locates the value of Occupy in its manifold expressions of the desire for "something different," in its offering of a "place where people are free to dream of some other way for human beings to get along."[21] Indeed, the unapologetic multiplicity of the Occupy movement echoes that of the earlier moment investigated in this study, urging a sustained theorization of the potential promises and pitfalls of such political incoherence. At a time in which Slavoj Zizek's observation that it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism has become a truism, Progressive-era socialist novels offer a glimpse of a moment in which authors and audiences saw—and took quite seriously—the prospect of other socioeconomic possibilities, and literature was indeed central to this process of visioning.

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20 My characterization of this diverse, dialectical, counterhegemonic front is inspired by the iconoclastic work of Laclau and Mouffe in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (1985), which continues to exert considerable influence upon contemporary leftist theory and strategy.

21 Matt Taibbi's "How I Stopped Worrying and Learned to Love the OWS Protests" in *Rolling Stone*, 10 Nov. 2011, Web, 1 March 2013.

II. CHAPTER 1. FREE UNIONS?: SOCIALIST MARRIAGE PLOTS

"These friends of ours announce to-day their marriage. They do so not primarily because our faulty human laws require it at their hands, but for a deeper and diviner reason. They do not assume that their life belongs to them alone—nor even that this supreme affection which has made them one, disclosed to them the face of God, and transfigured all this earthly life with His shining footprints, is theirs to hoard or hide. *In asserting the limitless freedom and the boundless authority of love they but disclose the full-orbed liberty of the sons of God and anticipate a world's emancipation.*" (16)

The above quote is from Reverend William Thurston Brown's sermon at the wedding of George Herron and Carrie Rand as recorded by Leonard Abbot[22] in his article about the ceremony. The article appeared in the June 1901 issue of the inaugural volume of *The International Socialist Review* (*ISR*), under the title "A Socialist Wedding."[23] Taking place just

22 Leonard Abbot was a member of the Socialist Democratic Party and then the Socialist Party of America who was an editor for *The Comrade* from its inception in 1901.

23"A Socialist Wedding" by Leonard Abbot, *ISR*, Vol. 2, no. 1 (July 1901), pp. 14-20. The Herron-Rand wedding took place on June 1st. The Unity Convention was held July 29th – August 1st. This same issue of *ISR* is full of material related to both "socialist weddings," and unions of all sorts (in politics, labor, and marriage) that resonate with the themes explored in this chapter. It includes a letter directly from Herron to the Grinnell Church Committee, accepting his dismissal from the Congregational Church (21-28). In his public response, he condemns the "coercive family system" and proclaims that marriages like his and Ms. Rand's are "mak[ing] ready" the way for the "new world [that is] coming" (24). Herron writes, "I thoroughly believe in the vital and abiding *union* of one man with one woman as a true basis of family life. But we shall have few such *unions* until we have a free family. Men and women must be economically free—free to use their powers to the fullest extent—free from the interference of legal and ecclesiastical force, and free to correct their mistakes, before we can have a family that is noble, built on *unions* that are good" (23). The letter is followed by a poem, "The Trade Unionist," a figure whom the poet depicts as developing from bloody strikes in the interest of his class to electoral politics in the interest of all classes: "And soon in Hall of State he'll stand,/ Class conscious but magnanimous,/ To legislate his blood-bought Truth,— / *The wrong of one is wrong of all*" (28). A later article, "The Unity Convention at Indianapolis," provides an account of a symposium to generate recommendations for the organization and platform of the SP (34-44, 74-76). One participant, FGR Gordon advises that "we need…a broad, tolerant, sensible and human socialist movement" that does away with "the large surplus amount of class-hatred" and recognizes that "the wage-working class is only a minority of the voters…[and] will not in fifty years have the political power to elect a president" (44). Another poem laments, "There is no simple rebellion on the old lines that calls for our adhesion

two months before the Socialist Unity Convention at which George Herron served as the first conference chairman, their marriage and the journalistic accounts of it seemed to anticipate another upcoming *union*: the formation of the Socialist Party of America (SP) from disparate leftist factions, most prominently members of *two* existing organizations: the Socialist Democratic Party (SDP) and the (right wing of the) Socialist Labor Party (SLP).[24] Indeed, the report on the convention took a cue from the romantic rhetoric of marriage—its record of the meeting at which socialists gathered to forge a "lasting union" is sprinkled with phrases such as "intense desire," "common devotion," and "controlling passion."[25]

Brown's sermon at the Rand-Herron wedding shows how marriage was understood in terms of socialism (a commitment to each other is also a commitment to the Cause, their marriage enacts socialist principles and prefigures the universal adoption of them); the convention report suggests that the creation of the Socialist Party was understood in some senses as a marriage. This correspondence, then, seems to indicate how marriage and socialism were mutually-informing tropes in the early days of the SP, a reciprocal relationship that is most vividly dramatized in novels written by Party members, many of which were domestic fiction that centered around marriage plots. Indeed, the first novel published by the cooperative press Charles Kerr & Co after its affiliation with the SP—Reverend Thomas

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and support;/ Rather a complicated labour of unraveling and extricating and liberating from the network of poisonous creepers of the ages, whose roots are in our own hearts" (50). There is also a related installation of Caroline Pemberton's novel, *The Charity Girl*, serialized in Vol. 1 and 2 (51-56). The episode resonates with the Herron-Rand situation, detailing the profession of love between the novel's upright hero and a married woman who "had thrown herself to the lions in the amphitheater of the social world!" (56).

24 There were a goodly number of "Independent" delegates, but the bulk of the participants were from these two groups, identified in the convention report as the "Chicago" and "Springfield" delegations in accordance with the locations of their party headquarters.

25 See "The Socialist Party: Indianapolis Convention Effects Union of All Parties" in *The Social Democratic Herald*, Vol. 4, no. 7, whole no. 159, (Aug. 17 1901), pp. 2-3. This is the most complete account of the Convention available. The author is unknown.

McGrady's *Beyond the Black Ocean* (1901)—contains a mythic account of the formation of the Party that is immediately preceded by the double wedding of the heroes to the daughters of the wealthy reformer who is their primary funder (284, 283).[26] Immediately following their cross-class alliances, the handsome well-educated heroes are nominated to be the presidential and vice presidential candidates for the Party and win the general election in a landslide. McGrady's close association between cross-class marriages and socialist success in electoral politics does not seem accidental. In fact, the two are repeatedly connected in Progressive-era socialist marriage plots, suggesting that early articulations of American socialist politics and modern marriage developed partially through reference to one another.

This chapter addresses the two dozen novels written by members of the SP from 1901-1917 that include marriage plots similar to those in McGrady's *Beyond the Black Ocean*, narratives that foreground symbolic matrimonial unions and political conversions through romantic love. It investigates how socialist marriage plots as a genre both paid homage to the SP's nineteenth-century literary and philosophical antecedents and took advantage of the emerging popularity of courtship stories in the mass culture of the early-twentieth-century U.S. And, it argues that they did so primarily in the service of articulating the values and strategies of a distinctly American strain of socialism, one that was based on class cooperation and primarily constitutional and electoral, educational and literary methods of social change. This "constructivist"[27] strain of socialism especially defined the "right wing" of the SP in which

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26 McGrady fictionalizes and mythicizes the Unity Convention in *Beyond the Black Ocean*, setting the novel in the imaginary land of New Israel. The history of New Israel, which is a distant territory stumbled upon by some shipwrecked Irish revolutionaries, is parallel with that of Europe and the U.S. The particulars of the Convention in the narrative are very similar to those of the real one, but the outcome of it has much more epic consequences: all of the SP candidates are immediately elected, directly proceeding to usher in the Cooperative Commonwealth and irreversible social progress.

27 This term was used by moderate and right-wing members to distinguish their progressive, practical, positive tactics from the "destructive" and "cataclysmic" tactics of the left wing.

George Herron and other Christian Socialists (or Socialist Christians) played an influential part. Since the SP was a conglomeration of pre-existing regionalized organizations, it was founded as "a broad political organization representing all shades of leftist convictions," accommodating many "different, even conflicting, points of view" (Shannon 6-7). The ideological diversity in the Party eventually coalesced along a spectrum book-ended by well-established right and left wing orientations. On the right, were politically-oriented "reformists" like Morris Hillquit and Victor Berger who sought to transform the socioeconomic system from the inside one step at a time, on the left were rigorously anticapitalist syndicalists such as Big Bill Haywood and Jack London who privileged worker-led direct action, organization, and revolution as the means to social change. The SP's figurehead, Eugene Debs, along with many others, fell somewhere in between. Right-wing[28] members were often referred to as "possibilists" or "opportunists" for what was seen as their tendency to make concessions to the bourgeoisie and compromise their Marxist principles by settling for reforms and ameliorative immediate demands instead of pushing for an all-out revolution.

The marriage plot was apt generically, symbolically, and ideologically for expressing the ideas, values, and strategies of the SP's right wing in several ways. If one of the foundational strategies of the SP was "boring from within" existing labor unions to slowly convert them to socialism,[29] this strategy—especially for the right wing—also seemed to apply to boring from within existing political and cultural institutions. As such, they often posed socialism as the extension or realization of America's founding values in which marriage played a part culturally and politically. Marriage has been a common political trope for the United

28 Just to be clear, I use the qualifier "right-wing" not as a retrospective characterization of their politics but rather as a distinction that was widely utilized within the Party itself during the time period.

29 One of the main causes of the defection of the right wing of the SLP (the "Kangaroos") to the SP was their opposition to "dual unionism," or rather their commitment to working within established labor unions rather than forming their own separate socialist labor unions (Shannon 10).

States since its establishment as a republic following the Revolutionary War. It supplanted the colonial parent-child metaphor as a more apt figure for an independent, voluntary union that—like a representative government—is supposedly based on consent (Cott 10, 15-16). The national model of marriage that held sway literally and figuratively into the twentieth century was influenced by Christianity and English Common Law, both of which involved consensual but asymmetrical unions that privileged the husband as head of the partnership. In this model, the wife's voluntary allegiance to a husband prefigures or reaffirms the citizen's relationship with the nation (or the congregant's relationship with God). Moreover, insofar as this relationship is based on a "free" contract, it ultimately serves to validate the unequal powers between the contracting parties wherein the authority of the husband/nation supersedes that of the wife/citizen.[30] This gendered model of political (and religious) participation was not unsuitable for the SP since its adherents saw it as a "proselyting order"[31] that was "firmly committed [to attaining] its objective, the cooperative commonwealth, through political and parliamentary action" (Shannon 7). As members of the SP remained largely "grounded in American moral traditions" who understood their project in nationalistic terms as "reaffirming and extending the ambition of republican citizenship" (Paul Buhle 11, 14), socialist authors

30 Carole Pateman points out in *The Sexual Contract* (1988) how the sexual contract precedes the social contract in America. However, even though the former is necessary in order to reproduce the latter, it is also often the forgotten and/or suppressed part of the "story" (3). Whereas early contract theorists lived during a time in which production and commerce were still located in the family, an expanding industrial economy shifted the basis of the family away from the father's procreative power to a contract (116). Of course, there is also a parallel here to Marx's critique of the "free labor" contract in *Capital.* In a particularly colorful passage on the subject, Marx acknowledges how the labor contract at first appears to be " very Eden of the innate rights of man," but as soon as the transaction takes place there is "a certain change…in the physiognomy of our *dramatis personae*" in which the capitalist "smirks self-importantly" while the worker "holds back, like someone who has brought his own hide to market and now has nothing to expect but—a tanning" (280).

31 See for instance, Reginald Wright Kauffman's *What is Socialism?* (New York: Moffat, Yard and Company, 1910). Kauffman claims that "The party is a proselyting order, and its members are expected to make converts to the cause" (174). In his conclusion, he asserts that the goal is to make each man "above the need of all law—the socially conscious, economically efficient, morally excellent son of God" (219).

largely drew upon (and sometimes revised) the traditional political marriage trope in their novels.

In a more literal sense, due to their investment in electoral politics and hence concern with popular appeal, the SP was fairly socially conservative in comparison to other radical movements. While some socialists did suggest rethinking the family as the basic unit of civilization and rationalizing the home, most upheld the home and marriage as the heart of future societies (often in a way that distinguished themselves from anarchists who were notorious for sexual license). Conservative attacks on socialism habitually centered on its threat to traditional family life, articulating—in ways that have now become naturalized and forgotten—the deep connections between marriage-based families, capitalism, private property, and individualism.[32] Subverting the rhetoric of conservatives, socialists saw in the family a potential model for collective and egalitarian rather than necessarily individualistic and competitive societies. They posed capitalism—which denied workers sufficient means to marry, procreate, and buy homes while exacerbating the market for prostitutes—not socialism as the grave threat to the family and civilized morality. Instead, socialism was the only means for "the establishment and preservation of the home in its perfect form."[33] And, equally, the goal of socialism was, "to make the whole world homelike."[34]

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32 Mari Jo Buhle notes how socialism's destruction of the family had been a common refrain amongst its critics since the 1840s (117). To give a few examples from the Progressive era, William Graham Sumner, an influential conservative sociologist, asserted in his book *Folkways* (1907) that "pair marriage is monopolistic" and therefore socialists are "forced to go to war on marriage and the family because [in them] lie the strongholds of 'individualistic vices' which he cannot overcome. He has to mask this battery, however because he dare not openly put it forward" (376-377). Two anonymous *New York Times* articles, "Coming Slavery: Barbarism and Servitude as Embodied in Socialism" (5/26/1912) and "Socialism and Marriage" (12/1/1911), reiterate Sumner's ideas ("Private property as an institution is essential to human freedom," so abolishing it would "throw over civilization" and "create in place of the free family a family of slaves" and, "The great foe of Socialism, of the communistic idea of society, is the family. Marriage is the flower of individualism.").

33 Pg. 24 in "Women and Socialism" by May Walden (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Co, 1909).

Abbot's account of the Herron-Rand wedding strongly emphasizes the political and utopian nature of such socialist marriages. He refers to the ceremony witnessed as, "the dedication of these two lives to the socialist movement" (14) rather than to each other, "emphasizing that this marriage meant [a] more complete consecration to socialism" (17), and concluding that the wedding produced, "the vision of the New Life of Socialism, when the love that made this union holy shall be the only basis of marriage, and when this love, stretching out, shall embrace the common life of the world" (20). Here, then, marriage is presented as a model for social engagement instead of a turn away from public life and politics, contradicting a dominant line of thought that posed marriage as an expression and affirmation of private property and American individualism.

Marriage, in its traditional and small-scale nature, also meshed well with the right-wing SP's gradualist, "evolutionist" vision of social change that some frustrated Party members referred to as "slowcialism" (Shannon 16). Against left-wing European socialist movements and the SLP, which emphasized class struggle and the mass mobilization of the proletariat as a revolutionary subject to overthrow the existing class relations, socialist domestic fiction most often rejected the idea of an abrupt break from the existing socioeconomic system and relations of production. Casting off what right-wing theorist John Spargo refers to as "the old and generally discarded cataclysmic theory," they instead imagined the possibility of transforming those relations one household and house bill at a time.

Because they were so popular at the time, the novel in general and marriage plots specifically were appropriate generic modes for the middle-class, educational orientation of

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34 Frances Willard, head of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (quoted in Mishler 19).

constructivist socialists.[35] "Courtship stories"—which generally took heterosexual romances ending in marriage as their subject and the aspiring middle classes as their audience—dominated the arena of fiction during the Progressive era and so were a distinctly "opportunist" genre.[36] To say that the marriage trope was in many ways apt for the early SP is not therefore to say that it was deployed in ideologically-identical ways among novels or even within a particular novel. Still, while there were many variations on the marriage plot, there are some discernible patterns in their symbolic and ideological dimensions. Potential romantic partners often align with different strategic approaches to bringing about socialism, representing various arenas of agitation such as art, politics, and industry. The most prevalent pattern is that the symbolic unions between individual men and women also metaphorically or literally represent class relations--usually, but not always, the relationship between labor and capital. As such, there are consistently figurative overlaps between class and gender even if the overlaps are not themselves consistent within the genre as whole.

Symbolic marriages inevitably "gender" the social grouping, institution, and/or concept that each partner represents in a variety of ways that work with and against the available scripts for men and women. Sometimes they revise those scripts along with the corresponding social institutions; more often they reinforce dominant hierarchical discourses, revealing (on occasion self-consciously) the entrenched sexist and classist attitudes among political radicals. On the other hand, at a time when the Woman Question was not being asked much less answered in official Party politics, socialist domestic fiction manifests gender, sexuality, and

35 Indeed, the majority of the novelists in the SP tended toward its right wing. An important and prolific exception is Jack London, who published nineteen novels from 1901 – 1917 as compared to the fifty-three produced by all the other SP novelists combined during the same time period.

36 I take this term from Richard Ohmann, who identifies courtship stories as the most prevalent genre of fiction at the turn of the century. See Ohmann's chapter on "Fiction's Inadvertent Love Song," in *Selling Culture* (New York: Verso, 1996): 287-337.

women's rights as central concerns of Party members that implicitly and explicitly shaped their understandings of socialism. Socialist courtship stories, then, had great potential to contest patriarchal and orthodox tendencies within the Party and to look for the possibility of *coalition across differences* instead of solidarity based on an assumed homogeny. Unfortunately, the types of "free unions" imagined tended to preserve the regnant forms of social privilege and asymmetrical distribution of power inherent in the American social, labor, and marriage contracts.

A. CROSS-CLASS MARRIAGES AND "NEW" SOCIALISM

Cross-class marriages were such a frequent plot device in socialist novels that Upton Sinclair joked in *Love's Pilgrimage* that the most promising "solution" to the social problem according to novelists "seemed to be for the handsome young leader of the union to marry the daughter of the capitalist" (421). Leftist critics sometimes treated this trend in novels with derision. Anarchist Max Baginski, for instance, referred to George Cram Cook's 1911 revolutionary romance, *The Chasm* as, "a novel with a Social Democratic label and abortive class consciousness," quipping in his review that "The Civic Federation should not ignore the suggestion of Love as the soothsayer of the class conflict."[37] In spite of such critiques, the cross-class alliance is by far the most common outcome of socialist marriage plots, featured in *By Bread Alone* (1901), *Beyond the Black Ocean* (1901), *The Charity Girl* (1901), *Rebels of the New South* (1904), *The Recording Angel* (1905), *The Iron Heel* (1906), *To Him that Hath* (1907), *The*

37"Some Books," *Mother Earth*, Vol. 6 (1911), pg. 216. The Civic Federation was a moderate reformist organization of business and labor leaders who tried to ameliorate antagonistic relations between labor and capital. In spite of his own misgivings about the symbolic marriage plot, Sinclair was actually a fan of *The Chasm*, which did at least shake up the formula by having its heroine *divorce* her aristocratic husband to marry the young labor leader.

Cage (1907), *The Scarlet Shadow* (1907), *Toilers and Idlers* (1907), *The Radical* (1907), *The Nine-Tenths* (1911), *The Chasm* (1911), *The Children of Light* (1912), and *Idle Wives* (1914).[38]

The plotlines of these novels stick closer to the generic prescriptions for courtship stories than one might at first expect. After all, the cross-class marriage is the modern marriage par excellence since it needs must be based on "true love" and sexual attraction rather than monetary or familial considerations (Cott 150). Though the construction of modern marriage corresponded with changing cultural and material circumstances for women that theoretically offered them greater economic, political, and sexual freedom, its chief characteristic was not necessarily gender equality. Instead, the hallmark of modern marriage was *romantic love*, a value that was inculcated to a large extent through literature. As David Shumway has pointed out, the discourse of romance became increasingly "grafted onto" marriage plots in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and novels played a large part in popularizing the romantic conception of marriage (20-21).[39]

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38 Herron's real-life marriage to Rand also heralded this trend of class cooperation, since his new wife happened to be an heiress. Like the double-wedding in *Beyond the Black Ocean* that pairs young socialists with the children of their capitalist benefactor, Herron wedded the daughter of his wealthy benefactress (whose fortune would eventually go towards founding the Rand School of Social Science). As it turned out, Herron was quite infamous for marrying "up," especially since he had to divorce a working-class woman in order to do so. He continued to be known in the press for years to come as "the man who left a true wife and married a rich young girl." (See J.A. Noyes March 23, 1909 article written on "'Christian' Socialists" for *The New York Times*, pg. 8). This mark on his reputation continued to haunt him even after he left the SP to become a foreign correspondent for the U.S. government during WWI (when there were public protests over his appointment and participation in diplomacy). Despite the popular media's questioning of his material incentives for marriage, their union was seen by their comrades as a cross-class alliance in the service of a great Cause. There were a few such "fairytale" romances among socialists that caught the public imagination such as that of Rose Pastor Stokes, a Jewish cigar maker who had a much-publicized marriage with socialist millionaire, J.G. Phelps Stokes and was thereafter dubbed "the world's best-loved rich woman."

39 See David Shumway's chapter, "Romance in the Romance and the Novel," pp. 31-62 in *Modern Love* (New York: New York University Press, 2003).

As Richard Ohmann points out, the proliferation of courtship stories in American mass culture reflected and shaped the rise of its professional-managerial class[40] (PMC), "provid[ing the PMC with] models of love and courtship" that helped reproduce capitalist culture and class relations (320-321, 331). If the typical courtship story began with two soul-mates cruelly torn apart by circumstances, it always ended with their jubilant romantic reunions and wedding vows. The bride and groom were often from different classes, forging voluntary alliances between upper-class owners of the means of production and middle-class professionals that resulted in the improvement of the material, social, and emotional conditions of both. Thus, the bourgeois protagonists' freedom to make contracts ensured their socioeconomic success and complete romantic fulfillment. Accordingly, courtship stories never featured the urban working classes, who were depicted as degenerate products of their environment rather than as fit and masterful liberal subjects whose ability to triumph over their circumstances justified their social advancement (Ohmann 287-337). As the genre was deeply implicated in the inculcation of capitalist values, it presented an obvious site for socialists to make a cultural intervention that might disrupt the reproductions of such values. However, the interventions that SP authors made in the genre seemed to be aimed more at changing the values of the PMC than they were at displacing the PMC's cultural authority altogether.

Importantly, if the heroes and heroines in socialist marriage plots repeatedly select upper-class mates, it is not because there is no other option available. On the contrary, the bulk of SP courtship stories follow the love-triangle device common to the genre, depicting protagonists whose affections are torn between bourgeois and proletarian lovers and ultimately (and one might suggest counter-intuitively) are resolved in favor of the former. These

40 The PMC is a class of "salaried mental workers who do not own the means of production and whose major function in the social division of labor [is] the reproduction of capitalist culture and capitalist class relations" (Ehrenreich 11).

narratives present a working-class option only to pointedly dismiss him or her and, in doing so, reinforce the cross-class romance and those avenues of agitation more associated with middle-class values: electoral politics, education, and artistic production. It is safe to say, then, that besides promoting cross-class cooperation, these courtship stories manifest a profound ambivalence about the working class that inhered even among socialists.

Socialist novelists tended to verify dominant middle-class cultural assumptions, linking direct action and the working class with violence and ignorance. As is still the case today, they projected a deep suspicion of workers' "selfish" motives for strikes and socialism. Such is the case for Clara, the heroine of Florence Converse's very interesting Christian-Socialist novel, *The Children of Light* (1912). Clara winds up rejecting the devoted but combative working-class Cuthbert in favor of her extremely rich and gifted second cousin Lucian. She cannot sympathize with the impatient and dogmatic Cuthbert because his socialism is inspired by "self-interest" rather than sacrifice (198), which imposes an insurmountable "spiritual barrier" between them (200). In George Cram Cook's *The Chasm* (1911), the exceptional upper-class heroine Marion expresses a similar doubt to her exceptional working-class lover Bradford, worrying that his class as a whole is not ready for power. "I'm not so sure," Marion confides to Bradford in one of their tête-à-têtes, "[that] the workers will ever win. I would not like to see the present wage-workers, degraded by bad conditions, secure control of the world…If they are to gain power I hope men like you will first have made them more fit for it" (361). Even the representation of those working-class characters who are treated with considerable admiration, such as Mary Burke, the beautiful but impoverished daughter of an Irish miner in Upton Sinclair's *King Coal*, manifests class-based ambivalence or apprehension. Though the upper-class hero Hal finds Mary as enticing as a rose blooming in a wasteland, he still worries that she was "suckled on despair" and has "the poison of it…deep in her blood" (100). In spite of her

robust health and undeniable beauty, Hal cannot help but fixate on her "hands, big and rough with hard labour" (e.g. 279). This repeated anatomical detail looms as a metonym for both her exploitation and potential power, uniquely summing up the attractiveness and revulsion Hal associates with her class.

The ambivalence of these characters towards the working class reflects popular anxieties about workers who were beginning to visibly and militantly revolt against their oppression. The SP was formed on the tail of a string of violent, sensational labor uprisings such as the Haymarket Affair (1886), the Homestead Strike (1892), and the Pullman Strike (1894). Socialist marriage plots seem to have been uniquely designed to assuage fears of the "rising tide of anarchy" and "mob rule" popularly associated with their assumed constituency of (especially immigrant) labor. Many SP authors take these memorable labor uprisings as the historical contexts for their novels in order to distance themselves from them. Consequently, the marriage plot often accompanies a strike plot with which it is juxtaposed, and so such novels are as much about critiquing the limitations of direct action (and the left wing of the SP) as they are about promoting constructivist socialism.

As the SP was first and foremost a national political party organized to help vote in socialism, it is perhaps not surprising that their novels and propaganda would focus on pushing the ballot box rather than the strike.[41] However, as the self-proclaimed political analog to the labor movement, it is surprising the extent to which some constructivist members of the SP completely dismissed the strike as a means of class struggle. Rufus F. Weeks, for instance, boldly demanded that the worker wage class struggle with "BALLOTS INSTEAD OF

41 On the other hand, left wing members viewed the Party primarily as a tool for organizing and educating workers since they refused to tone down their anticapitalist agenda in order to earn votes. Their refusal to countenance any ideological compromise also made them completely ineffectual in the off-chance that they were elected.

STRIKES," referring to the latter as a "poor, pathetic weapon" in comparison to the "weapon handy [that] we of the 'better classes' created…for him when we established universal suffrage [and] universal education."[42] The chief characteristics, then, of socialist courtship stories are virtuous, successful "cross-class" marriage plots and gruesome failed strike plots, both of which promote the right-wing strategy of class cooperation. Put in terms of courtship-story conventions, the romantic appeals of strikes and working-class characters constitute the "circumstances" which must be overcome in order to assure a stable and happy "union."

Right-wing socialists, responding to frequent accusations of inciting, "class hatred," often emphasized class collaboration over antagonism. They took care to remind members of the SP "that class hatred was 'a monstrous thing…to be abhorred by all right-thinking men and women'" (Kipnis 227). Similarly, a 1913 article inspired by the work of right-wing thinker Morris Hillquit in *The New York Times* tried to stress to the public how the premises of American socialism were constructive and humanitarian as compared to those of the international movement, claiming that the SP is "a labor party, aiming to reform social conditions, not to destroy society. Socialism has become a new democracy for all humanity, and not for any class. Class war is being abandoned for class cooperation through the perception that any class interest which clashes with the interest of all society cannot survive."[43]

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42 Rufus W. Weeks was a Christian Socialist who participated in the Intercollegiate Socialist Society and was a founding member of the Collectivist Society, a group organized in 1902 "for propaganda work" explicitly aimed at the bourgeois element of society. Though its members were "committed to the main orthodox tenet of scientific Socialism—the economic interpretation of history, with its corollary of the class struggle," they also held, "as Marx and Engels held, that the force of ideals is a powerful factor in the social process; and it is therefore to the arousing of ideals among the middle class rather than the awakening of class consciousness among the workers that the publications of the society are directed" (89). This formulation seems to imply that the "force of ideals" does not apply to workers. See the article on the Society written by one of its members, W.H. Ghent, in *The Commons* Vol. 9, no. 3 (March 1904): 89-91.

43 "The New Socialism: Striking Difference Between the Movement Here and Abroad" in *The New York Times* (3/16/1913).

Accordingly, the author emphasized that this particularly nationalistic (or even nativist) "new" type of socialism was no longer the province of the working class alone, but also of the PMC and upper classes: "Socialists no longer are merely the proletariat. They are lawyers, physicians, journalists, professors, even the rich." Hence, the author tends to verify popular anxieties about the socialism of "*passion* and poverty" or of "Syndicalism and *mob rule*," even as he identifies them as characteristic of European rather than American radical movements. Such formulations tend to be classist, posing the working class as violent, uneducated, and atavistic while explicitly linking sexual license with direct action. Similarly, socialist marriage plots more often than not manifest an anxiety about the working class and the violent methods associated with them; sometimes they go so far as to write the working class out of the story altogether, making the chaste and well-educated elite the champions of social change.

This "new" American socialism was disparagingly associated with "revisionist" and "opportunist" tendencies internationally, but it could just as easily be aligned with the sentiments and strategies of the origins of pre-Marxian socialism in the U.S.[44] Socialist marriage plots drew not only upon the contemporary enthusiasm for romance and courtship stories but also upon the utopian and moral-sentimental strains of their extremely popular radical literary antecedents. There were two major American literary benchmarks for socialist

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44 Right-wingers were especially associated with Christian Socialist movements whose roots predated the formation of the SP. Many of them were affiliated with the Christian Socialist Fellowship (CSF) founded in 1906, which functioned as an independent propaganda group, separate from but in support of the SP. As the CSF "based their analysis on the brotherhood of man rather than on the class struggle," they were naturally aligned with the "constructivist" side of the SP (Kipnis 269). In 1909, Spargo referred to the CSF as, "the most remarkable recent development of socialism in America," and noted how the U.S. was unique in having, "a perfectly harmonious and intimate relation between [the Christian Socialist movement] and the regular socialist political party" (16). He saw this union as heralding a "new socialism of a quality and temper undreamed of by Marx and Engels" in which both "crude," "rationalist" Marxism and Christianity have "thrown off the shackles of dogma" (20). See John Spargo's article, "Christian Socialism in America," in *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 15, no. 1 (July 1909): 16-20.

novelists, Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) and Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward, 2000 – 1887* (1888). These novels, which were the first and third best-selling novels of the nineteenth century respectively, were extolled for their immense popularity and social impact more so than for their aesthetics or literary contributions. Stowe's novel was a major boon to the abolitionist movement and was even seen as a major catalyst for the Civil War, while *Looking Backward* inspired an entire political movement visible in the formation of 162 "Nationalist" clubs, a political party, and two magazines in the U.S., all of which existed mainly for the purpose of turning Bellamy's utopian fiction into fact (Miller v-vi). Practically every reform or revolution-minded author identified their goal as being to write the next *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, while *Looking Backward* prompted a slew of literary responses to or elaborations of Bellamy's vision of the cooperative commonwealth: sixty-two novels from 1888-1900 alone. For many early-twentieth-century American radicals, then, their first exposure to socialism was through a non-Marxist novel rather than *The Communist Manifesto* or *Capital*.[45] Hence, it is safe to say that SP authors took ideological as well as strategic or aesthetic cues from Stowe and Bellamy.

Socialist novelists were influenced by Stowe's privileging of love and sacrifice as means to social change. However, for Stowe, love was a religious, maternal, and apolitical solution to social inequality whereas in the hands of socialists, it is usually politicized, sexualized, and secularized. *Looking Backward* makes use of popular romantic conventions, directly setting the

45 Though the SP was supposedly founded on Marx-inspired scientific socialism, David Shannon notes how most of the delegates at the Unity Convention had little to no "direct relation to Marx" and were more likely previous adherents of the Nationalist or Populist movements (3). Eugene V. Debs apparently converted to socialism after reading *Looking Backward* in prison following the Pullman strikes before going on to be a figure head for the Marxist variety as the SP's perennial presidential candidate. Many a character in socialist novels follow a similar trajectory that is symbolic of the history of socialism in the U.S., such as Custis in *Rebels of the New South*, who is initiated into socialism via Bellamy and later matures into "full-flowered" scientific socialism long after he identifies as socialist (223).

stage for the many symbolic marriages in socialist novels. In Bellamy's marriage plot, his wealthy insomniac hero, Julian West, falls asleep immediately following his engagement to a woman of his class only to wake up in the year 2000 and be redeemed from his capitalist past by wedding a woman from the future. In his preface to the novel, Bellamy claims the romance is included only to "alleviate the instructive quality of the book," explicitly dismissing the saccharine and contrived marriage plot as a mere add-on or concession that had no significant bearing on its political message.[46] By contrast, those socialist authors who followed in his footsteps were obviously more conscious of the instructive and ideological nature of the romance itself.

What right-wingers presented as a "new socialism of a quality and temper undreamed of by Marx and Engels,"[47] was in many ways a continuation of Bellamy's conservative form of anticapitalism. Just as Bellamy's Nationalists claimed to speak for all humans, not just workers, right-wing members of the SP tried to unite all classes under the banner of "humanist" socialism.[48] Both supposedly inclusive, class-neutral orientations, however, were motivated by an appeal to middle-class sensibilities based essentially in a top-down "antidemocratic collectivism" that gave the educated few unilateral control over instituting the government they thought best for the many. [49] As critic Arthur Lipow points out, "Just as Bellamy's

46 Bellamy goes so far as to position West's marriage with Edith Leete, who turns out to be a close descendant of his former fiancée, as a result of atavistic sentimentality since Edith's obsession with their tragic love story is more in keeping with the era in which the novel was written than the pragmatic coming era it seeks to portray.

47 See, pg. 20 of John Spargo's article, "Christian Socialism in America," in *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 15, no. 1 (July 1909): 16-20.

48 Likewise, prominent feminist thinker and Nationalist Charlotte Perkins Gilman wrote in 1898 that she did not favor the "narrow" interests of both the woman's and labor movements since "Both make a class issue of what is in truth a social issue, a question involving every human interest" (138).
49Bellamy himself did not favor socialism precisely because of the likelihood of the label itself disenfranchising middle-class citizens: "I may seem to outsocialize the socialists, yet the word socialist is

utopian views were not an isolated expression of a lonely dreamer, so Bellamyism was a genuine part of the American reform political tradition—not despite, but *because of* its authoritarianism and hatred of democracy" (12). Marriage-plot-driven strike novels carry on this tradition, privileging the power of bourgeois romantic marital unions over working-class labor unions. The right-wing socialist courtship story, then, usefully endorses nonviolent methods but also promotes a conservative nationalistic and authoritarian conception of socialism. To see these tendencies in action, I now turn to the first strike and courtship story written by a member of the SP.

B. "OUTGROWING" THE WORKING CLASS: AUTHORITARIAN SOCIALISM AND CROSS-CLASS LOVE TRIANGLES

I.K. Friedman's *By Bread Alone* was published in the same year as the Unity Convention (1901).[50] The novel is particularly important to this study because it is in many ways the paradigmatic socialist marriage plot, pioneering many of the generic trends that became common in novels written by members of the early SP as a whole. Its influential narrative features include: a strike plot, a prominent marriage plot that is complicated by a love triangle, and a case of voluntary downward class mobility with its college-educated, bourgeois hero Blair

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one I could never stomach. It smells to the average American of petroleum, suggests the red flag and all manner of sexual novelties, and an abusive tone about God and religion" (from a letter written to William Dean Howells, quoted in Lipow 22). There were of course socialists within the Nationalist movement. One of the precursors to the SP, the SDP, was apparently officially in touch with Bellamy and saw themselves as carrying on his legacy. In a letter to Bellamy typed on SDP letterhead, Cyrus F. Willard warned Bellamy not to dismiss socialists because their participation was integral to the success of the Nationalist Movement. See "Social Democratic Party of America Correspondence," 1889 & 1897; Tamiment Manuscript Collection; TAM245; box 7, folder 11; Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, Elmer Holmes Bobst Library, New York University Libraries.

50Isaac Kahn Friedman was a fairly affluent, college-educated Chicago native whose parents were German Jewish immigrants (Rideout 14). He became radicalized through his involvement with the Settlement House movement in Chicago (Filler 113).

Carrhart temporarily joining the proletariat when he takes up work in a mill. Though the action is set in a fictional Illinois town, most of the events in the strike plot obviously are based on the infamous 1892 Battle of Homestead wherein disgruntled workers rose up against the Carnegie Steel Company after a prolonged labor dispute. The parallels between the fictional and real strike are many: an unjust lockout, a violent confrontation between strikers and Pinkerton detectives, a government intervention to break the strike, and an anarchist plot to assassinate the chairman of the company that not only fails but also precipitates the failure of the strike as whole. The novel restages these events in order to give its hero (and by extension its reader) a firsthand experience of the limitations of strikes as a strategy for achieving socialism or social progress in general.

Historian Robert Wiebe has seen violent labor uprisings in the late nineteenth century such as the Homestead Strike as partly responsible for the reformist spirit of the Progressive Era. As such sensational examples of class warfare heightened the typical American distrust of the top and bottom, Wiebe argues that Progressive reforms were motivated by middle-class fears of both avaricious capitalists and animalistic workers.[51] Friedman's novel largely plays into this perspective. Strikes are posed as "a relic of barbarism" and hatred set against the omen of love and progress forecasted in the marriage plot (240). Marriage, then, is the literal and figurative alternative to the terrors of class war in the novel.

Thus, *By Bread Alone* both extends the legacy of earlier American socialist traditions and provides an appropriate foundational text for the right-wing SP by distancing socialism from anarchism, violence, and industrial sabotage in favor of cooperation and electoral

51 See *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967).

politics.[52] The marriage plot, therefore, is not a supplement to the politics of the text, but absolutely integral to establishing its strategic and theoretical outlook for socialism. For one, it provides a direct contrast with the lawlessness of anarchism, which is associated with sexual promiscuity as well as violence. The anarchist leader Sophia Goldstein—based very unflatteringly on Emma Goldman—has a long, swarthy "cruel sensual face, with the bad underlip and the savage black eyes" (92, 97). She has "the scent of the vulture for carrion" (98), and turns those men who listen to her into "bloodhounds" (101). Her role as a predator that uses others to fulfill her own twisted sexual and political desires is vividly dramatized in her malicious, destructive manipulation of an innocent young Polish man whom she takes as a lover, spurring him to a failed assassination attempt that ruins him and the strike. The socialist marriage plot, then, is the civilized alternative to the lusty atavistic violence of anarchists. Indeed, the massive anarchist bomb plot at the end is ultimately foiled when its mastermind (the company's head chemist) falls in love with the company owner's daughter and lets the "noble" influences of chaste and devout true love trump his destructive impulses.

Furthermore, within the marriage plot itself, Blair's choice of bride is extremely significant. He initially is torn between Evangeline—the sweet, virtuous, and beautiful daughter of the villainous company owner—and Martha—the dark, mysterious daughter of a company worker. While Blair might be confused over which lady he most desires, he is not confused as to what each represents to him. In fact, Blair consciously makes a class-based comparison of the two: "Martha, dissatisfied, evidently unhappy, out of rapport with her surroundings, came up for comparison with Evangeline, demure and struggling, whose wealth made an easy path for opportunity to walk to achievement" (150). Their differing class statuses

52 The review of the novel in *The Literary Digest* (Vol 23, no. 22, November 30, 1901) frames it as such: "The sharp distinction which is drawn in the novel between the anarchists of the Emma Goldman order and the socialists of the school of Dr. Herron is most timely in view of the present widespread and indiscriminate denunciation of all social theorists" (694).

influence his romantic projections of them, initially in Martha's favor. He has a dream in which, "Evangeline held her hand out to him in the distance, pleadingly, supplicatingly, as if she feared to sink in the swirling, tempestuous waters of life with his assistance and the support of his stronger arm, and that Martha stood at his side to help him battle for the survival of his ideals against those very waters away from which Evangeline crouched in fear" (151). But we quickly learn that Blair's vision and interest in Martha are only the misguided result of his tendencies to romanticize the poor. Soon after, there is a quick and surprisingly bitter dismissal of Martha (and the working class) as a false "idol," specifically when she fails to idolize his Cause (266).

Interestingly, the independence that Blair attributes to Martha in the dream is one of the main causes of his ultimate rejection of her—he is willing for her to stand strong with him but not against him. When she instead continues to disagree with his ideals, it suddenly becomes lamentable that, "[r]eliant, strong, decided, Martha seemed to need no man's protection" (259). The narrative explains Blair's waning affection with the assertion that he, "was a trellis, not a vine; he wished to uphold, not to be upheld…Had she placed her weakness in the charge and confidence of his strength, his arm might have enfolded her lovingly" (272). By contrast, his relationship with Evangeline is characterized by almost exactly the same trellis-vine metaphor from the beginning, where their early love affair is described as "like an ivy twining softly around the oak, in gratitude for its protection" (7).[53] When he reconnects with Evangeline following his brief infatuation with Martha, Blair notes with satisfaction how he, "always felt his strength, his brute, masculine strength, when with her" (314). He admits

53 It is possible that the use of the ivy metaphor offers a critique of this model since it is commonly known to be a parasite. As it does not have a symbiotic relationship with oak, it is not a sustainable model—and indeed, Blair is almost physically destroyed by the end of the novel.

that, "Evangeline's weakness, her sheer feminine weakness, was one of the ties that drew Blair to her" (314).[54]

Clearly, Blair's changing romantic perspective is the result of Martha's refusal to bow to his vision and ideology while he is easily able to "carry [Evangeline] into the fortress of his faith" and "h[o]ld her soul captive" (319). He sets out to "conquer" Martha intellectually and romantically, but "[t]ime and time again, ever with a bitter force renewed, it had come home to him that this girl of the people (he was pleased to term her thus)—this representative of the unnumbered thousands whose condition, spiritual and material, he wished to better, stretched no welcoming hand towards his rod of deliverance"—a decidedly phallic image (260). Instead of upsetting Blair's patriarchal assumption of mastery and top-down politics, his failed romance with Martha identifies her as unworthy of his love, thereby reaffirming his superior authority and nagging suspicion that the working class remains unfit for political power. In this way, Blair's understanding of the working class is aligned with hegemonic understandings of femininity: Blair wishes to have the same type of traditional "union" with the proletariat as he would with his potential wife in which two become one and he is the "one."[55] Hence, the same paternalistic attitude that Martha refuses to countenance in their courtship comes to rigorously

54 To be fair, Evangeline is not just a fragile flower. She goes to college, wants to be something more than "ornamental," briefly starts a settlement house, defies her father to marry Blair, and single-handedly nurses Blair back to health from an infected gunshot wound in a tenement house. It is interesting, then, that the narrative is so insistent upon her being both a New Woman and an Angel of the House.

55 The figurative association that I am trying to draw out here between upper-class women (via Evangeline) and the proletariat (via the mill workers) might at first seem strange. Besides the corresponding oppression faced by both women and workers, upper-class women are generally depicted as being the most ignorant of reality due their extremely sheltered upbringings and lifestyles. Similarly, the proletariat is assumed to be deeply ignorant due to their extremely underprivileged upbringings and lifestyles. Both have a false consciousness, one due to lack of experience and the other due to lack of education. And in both cases, socialist men step in to elucidate women and workers. In a telling passage, Weeks describes (middle-class) socialists as "men [who] are unsparing analysts, and inexorable forecasters; they have sounded the depths of the self-unconscious proletarian mind, and they have announced what the will of the working class is to be, as fast as it comes to its sense of itself" (5).

define Blair's approach to socialism.[56] The romantic developments in the narrative consistently serve to introduce, test, and refine its endorsed economic and political strategies.

The understanding of socialism in the novel, then, extends the "benevolent" authoritarian socialism of the early Bellamy, which had such profound popular appeal in the U.S. Indeed, the title of the novel (whose words never come up in the narrative itself), evokes the asymmetrical gendered models of religious and political participation suggested by the marriage trope. It is a Biblical allusion that refers to the Old-Testament God starving and then feeding his chosen people on Manna in order to establish his ultimate authority. The passage in the Bible reads, "man doth not live by bread only, but by every *word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live" (Deuteronomy 8:3).[57] Similarly, it is established early on that Blair (whose first name evokes the booming power of his speech), "had the voice of a God to threaten, to command, to cajole, to thrill" (4).

Just as the romance that is consummated depends upon reinforcing Blair's mastery and vision, the only gains that the workers make come from following him as their "captain" (303). When Blair manages to become the spokesperson for the union's negotiating committee, the company owner Marvin anxiously recognizes that "Blair's intellectual superiority was stamped on his countenance as his physical superiority was stamped on his body" (250). The owner also realizes that Blair's supremacy weakens his own position: "This arguing with a spokesman was

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56 Friedman wrote an article for a Progressive weekly on Belgian socialism that describes their movement in terms that very much resonate with type of socialism articulated in his novel. In it he claims that the Belgian socialist "holds that one class cannot supplant another, that the proletariat cannot take the place of the bourgeoisie in government and industry unless *endowed* with the ability of so doing" (my emphasis 978). See "Belgian Socialism," *The Outlook* Vol. 71, no. 15 (August 16, 1902) : 975-978.

57 The same verse also comes up twice in the New Testament: "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" in Matthew 4:4 and, "And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God" in Luke 4:4. All of these translations are from the King James Bible.

a difficulty against which he was not forearmed; usually the committee disagreed among themselves, and experience had taught him how to widen the breach and weaken the enemy's force" (251). The boss becomes so annoyed by Blair's "quiet, positive, masterful manner" and "tactics [that] were too much like his own" (253), that he eventually leaves the negotiations with the declaration, "'I am sick of this one-man power!'" (258).

This "one-man" approach gives the workers a tactical advantage that they reasonably decide to exploit upon declaring strike, forming an advisory committee that is given "full and unlimited power to direct the campaign of labor against capital" (298). Not surprisingly, "Blair was chosen [as its] chairman; his responsibility was grave, his power all but supreme" (298). However, their negotiating power is lost when the workers—utterly bereft, starving, and susceptible to the spirit of anarchism—rebel and storm the shut-down factory to destroy it along with the lives of a few loyal or pacifist employees. In the violent chaos, Blair's singular "orotund voice" is replaced by a "polyglot muttering [that] buzzed about [his] roaring ears" (330). Since "the inconsistency that comes from many thoughts was incomprehensible to their narrow, sodden understanding" (330), Blair is forced to watch in impotent horror as,"[l]ike so many hideous dwarfs and deformed gnomes, spawn of the underground, they [performed] their unearthly work" of destroying the mill (342).

When the women of the workers' community join in the destruction, the link between the maintenance of the hierarchical social and sexual order becomes explicit: "Frenzy *unsexed* them; they were neither men nor women; they were something worse than either,—androgynous creatures that retained the worst passions of both and lost the best" (my emphasis 338). Just as Evangeline is described as a volatile "bundle of emotions" in "sharp mental contrast" to "the assurance and the positiveness of [Blair's] convictions," the workers have a damaging tendency towards acting based on emotion rather than reason (6). As the mob goes

to face (and kill and be killed by) the Pinkertons, Blair mourns that, "[h]is supremacy was lost again…His soldiery was a ruthless mob; *every man his own commander*" (my emphasis 358). Anarchy and violence are associated with (feminine) worker self-organization whereas socialism is associated with (phallic-masculine) top-down military organization and obedience.

The Brodski family, the Polish immigrants with whom Blair stays when he first starts at the mill, serves as a particularly tragic example of the sympathetic but as-of-yet unfit to rule working class. Mrs. Brodski is a widow with seven children. They live in incredible poverty and misery which is exacerbated by the strike and the loss of the eldest daughter's fiancé in a senseless industrial accident at the mill. When the workers break into the company property during the lockout, their whole family leads the siege. Their resistance is more than amply punished when the eldest daughter is shot by Pinkertons and the three youngest children are swallowed up by an enormous pile of coal as they are trying to set fire to a barge. Another son is lost in the botched assassination attempt on the chairman, and the family is finally polished off when the remaining two sons also forfeit their lives by partaking in a massive but foiled anarchist bomb plot designed to kill the entire board of directors and destroy all their property. Even for the immigrant workers, marriage surfaces as an alternative to all these senseless, self-defeating violence. The Brodskis' last bombing incident is prefaced by one of the sons marrying a coworker's daughter in a Polish ceremony that is described in warm, vibrant detail. The community comes together in love—the right kind of union, which actually provides a sound economic basis for the next generation since even the impoverished workers communally provide a substantial wedding gift for the young couple (414-418). In other words, the

Brodskis' class hatred and thirst for revenge dooms them all to wretched, meaningless deaths that do nothing to further the rights or better the conditions of workers.[58]

Against this dismal waste, the novel is sure to enumerate the opportunities for class solidarity and cooperation if only the workers would desist from their irrational violence and listen to Blair. The Pinkertons are touchingly humanized as they reluctantly face the angry mob; the soldiers of the National Guard have sincere moral qualms about breaking the strike; the police and elected officials are loathe to punish the workers with whom they sympathize over Marvin, the unscrupulous robber baron. However, the strikers' beastly violence leaves all these potential allies with no alternative but to side with "capital" just to stop the wanton destruction. Keeping with this theme, after the factory owner Marvin more than wins the strike, Evangeline's faithful love for Blair convinces him to better the workers' conditions and meet most of their demands based on his own initiative without them militantly demanding it. Their cross-class romance sets the example for class relations generally.

Blair's renewed commitment to Evangeline following his disillusionment with the working class corresponds with his realization that "the thing which strikes me strongest in this whole socialistic movement…is that the rich are more profoundly concerned than the poor. It is extending from up down; it is the rich who are bending their hands down to the poor, rather than the poor are lifting their hands up to the rich" (320). This is his "takeaway" from the whole experience, which he reaffirms as he leaves behind the steel mill forever (480). His marriage to Evangeline represents a turn away from direct action in the workplace towards the

58 There is a similar foiled bomb plot in John MacMahon's *Toilers and Idlers* (1907) wherein a gruff Polish molder tries to blow up his boss's factory, but only succeeds in killing himself and nearly killing one of his coworker's little girls, again emphasizing that, when workers employ the methods of class war, they only end up hurting themselves. The dark, brutish bomb-throwing anarchist, Zweinski, is humanized somewhat by telling his tragic back story, which renders his actions understandable if not condonable. Ultimately, in these novels, workers tend to be disqualified from being the agents of their own emancipation by their crippling experiences of oppression.

political arena where he will "work with the current and not against it" (480). Working "with the current" appears to mean *from* his original class position *with* the class he has identified as more progressive (the rich) and using the methods authorized *by* his class (parliamentary). The novel clearly favors the constitutional methods of representative democracy, which tellingly do not seem to be at odds with its authoritarian perspective on socialism, since Blair's confidence in his political success depends upon his godlike authority and charisma.

All in all, Blair stands out as a figurehead of sorts for authoritarian socialism, that is, a cooperative commonwealth instituted from above, based on his inspiration and expertise. He arrives at the mill with a predetermined vision of the cooperative commonwealth based on his in-depth intellectual studies. When he leaves, that vision remains strangely unchanged—the "foundation on which he had reared his lofty structure of ideals" may be "ruined and defiled," but he intends to rebuild on firmer footing (480). The resolution of the novel turns Blair towards orthodoxy in his refusal to reshape his vision to fit with the harsh realities of his experience. This socialist orthodoxy moreover is tied in with the maintenance of conservative norms of gender, class, and race. The novel has ample opportunity to challenge the stereotypes associated with its strike and marriage plots, but instead pointedly decides to reinforce them. Blair and Evangeline's marriage buttresses the conservative authoritarian model in several ways, by reestablishing their characters as the ideals of masculinity and femininity, by reconsolidating their class privilege, and by making their union subject to Blair being able to "carry her into the fortress of his faith" with the expectation that the "whole world would follow" (319).[59] As the much chastened couple takes the train away from the mill, they reflect

59 It is worth noting that Caroline Pemberton's novel *The Charity Girl*, which was serialized in *ISR* in 1901-1902 but never published in book form, has a nearly opposite plotline and ideological trajectory in terms of its class and gender politics (though it uses the Spanish-American War as its historical context instead of Homestead). The novel's hero, Julian Endicott, is similar to Blair in that he gives up the ministry after college to pursue social justice more directly, in his case through "sociological" work in an

that, "our suffering and trials prepared us for our marriage" (477). If marriage is the metaphor for this more civilized type of struggle based on class cooperation, then the strike is akin to the "suffering and trials" that socialists must go through in order to forge a more enlightened legal union.

Of course, it is only fair to point out that Friedman's perspective on socialism seems to have shifted in his subsequent writing. Though the upper-class Blair leaves the labor movement in the end because he is convinced that he will have more success working towards socialism in the political arena, in Friedman's next and last novel, *The Radical* (1907), his protagonist does the opposite.[60] The hero of *The Radical* is a successful Chicago politician from a working-class background who ultimately resigns his class-ascendant position as a U.S. senator. He in fact leaves behind corrupt Washington bureaucracy to return to community organizing and the labor movement with a wife who (after prolonged resistance) willingly gives up her place among the ultra-rich to join him. Completing the neat inverse parallelism of the two plots, both novels end with their broken heroes traveling in a train with their wives-to-

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urban charity organization. However, *The Charity Girl* provides one of the only examples in which the love triangle decidedly resolves itself in favor of the working-class immigrant woman (the titular "charity girl"), which also signals the hero's conversion to socialism and complete dismissal of modern, urban charity and reform (akin to Evangeline's settlement house). Julian, far from maintaining an impermeable "faith," has his ideas and authority constantly challenged, most often by women. He willingly renounces his "expert" status or any claims of superiority, which is one of the reasons he decides against being a pastor, and falls in love with the working-class woman who will become his wife precisely at the moment that he realizes she is *not* dependent upon him. (Of course, this working-class couple is also agreeably middle-class as Julian is a Harvard-educated farmer's son and his wife is an orphan with a bourgeois education.) The other early SP novel written by a woman, Vida Scudder's *A Listener in Babel* is a decided anomaly in its eschewing of the courtship story altogether. In fact, the narrative begins with its heroine narrowly avoiding what she later realizes would have been an unfulfilling, depressingly traditional marriage with a handsome socialist politician with whom she is in love. Instead, she opts for a "union with all humanity" (84), substituting "true wedded love" for "fellowship in desire," which is "the deepest union in the world—deeper than fellowship in love, in knowledge, in belief" (267). Her rejection of marriage also indicates her rejection of masculine authority. Pointedly, it is the dialogues and actions of a group of single women who have set out "to solve the social problem" that drive the narrative.

60 *The Radical* will be discussed in more depth in the second chapter, especially insofar as it undermines the nativist, authoritarian socialism of *By Bread Alone* through challenging its Anglo-Saxon supremacy.

be going in opposite directions away from the sites of their disillusionment. While both heroes remain hopeful at the end and dedicated to the Cause, reading them together shows the frustrating limitations of agitation in both the economic and political arenas. Jointly, they strongly evince the anxiety that the twin threats of the capitalist tyrant and the ignorant mob pervade both industry and politics.

I have set up the rhetorics of gender, class, and socialism in *By Bread Alone* at length in order to analyze subsequent variations on the themes in other novels written by socialists, many of which feature similar narrative devices and ideological valences. Critic Louis Filler suggests that Friedman "was unique" in that he "recognized the middle-class dilemma and portrayed it fully" (114). However, Friedman was more of a trendsetter than an aberration among novelists of the SP in this regard. Indeed, the majority of novels produced by early SP authors dramatize some version of the "dilemma" of the non-proletarian socialist and socialist marriage plots repeatedly do so through the love triangle.

Upton Sinclair, who was painfully self-conscious of his own inability to completely break away from his religious and bourgeois upbringing,[61] dramatizes exactly such a dilemma in his strike novel (and incomplete marriage plot) inspired by the 1914 Ludlow massacre, *King Coal* (1917).[62] The main character is the upper-class Hal Warner, who goes undercover to work in the Colorado coal mines, eventually finding himself torn between his gorgeous affluent fiancée and a militant "rose of the mining-camp." In the end, he must sheepishly admit that he is in love with both women, a state that mirrors his ideological confusion. The conclusion is refreshingly open-ended about his future political and romantic commitments, but his working-

61 See his autobiographical novel, *Love's Pilgrimage* (1911).

62 Following the senseless violence trope, the Ludlow Massacre was the devastating climax of the bloodiest strike in American history, which the United Mine Workers of America went on to lose.

class love interest wisely speculates to him that, "ye'll not be altogether satisfied with…either. Ye'll be unhappy either way—God help ye!" (373).

James Oppenheim's *The Nine-Tenths* (1911) features another salient class-based romantic triangle pitched around a strike plot. *The Nine-Tenths* (no doubt inspired by the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire that took place in the same year the novel was published) is about a wealthy self-made man, Joe Blaine, the owner of a print shop who holds himself responsible when his business burns to the ground because of lax rules about waste disposal and smoking. The fire kills a few of his male workers, but also sixty of the mostly immigrant women who worked in the hat shop above him. In the guilt-ridden aftermath of the fire, Joe dedicates his life and money to the "dead girls" and in doing so, converts to a socialist perspective and becomes a labor activist who runs a weekly called *The Nine-Tenths* (a title that refers to the proportion of society comprised of the exploited classes who labor for the top tenth). Inverting the actual historical events, Joe then finds himself leading a grueling six-month garment workers strike (based on the Uprising of 20,000 in 1909-1910) that nearly kills him and many of the striking women, and—like the actual Shirtwaist Strike—leads to only a limited victory for the mostly young, female immigrant workers involved.

Besides Joe's plucky widowed mother, there are two women in his life: Myra Craig, the prim and dissatisfied school teacher, and Sally Heffer, the hat-factory worker and inspirational labor activist. The marriage plot follows a similar trajectory to *By Bread Alone* in that Joe initially commits to Myra, is temporarily romantically (and politically) distracted by Sally, and then recommits to (a converted) Myra, sealing the deal with their marriage. While Myra is not technically of a different class than Sally in terms of her work (besides that she is a "brainworker" in the social division of labor), their backgrounds and characterizations very explicitly distinguish them via class-based markers.

Myra is presented as a picture of feminine refinement. She is "very small, very slight, but quite charming in her neat, lace-touched clothes. A fringe at the wrist, a bunch at the neck, struck her off as some one delicate and sensitive, and the face strengthened this impression. It was long and oval, with a narrow woman-forehead cut off by a curve of dark hair; the mouth was small and sweet; the nose narrow; the eyes large, clear gray, penetrating" (9). While Myra seems to be of Anglo-Saxon stock, Sally is marked as ethnic and a bit less attractive with "thin, sparse, gold-glinting hair, with face pallid and rounded, with broad forehead and gray eyes of remarkable clarity" (32). Also in contrast to Myra's tasteful lacey attire, the utilitarian Sally always wears a plebian brown suit.

Looking at the tasteful, daintily attractive Myra, Joe explicitly aligns her with the upper class, noting how, "one instantly guessed that she was an aristocrat by birth and breeding" (10). Indeed, when the third-person narrative switches to follow Myra's perspective, her character is introduced through her awakening from a reoccurring nightmare wherein "the fifty-seven members of her class arose from their desks with wild shrieks and danced a war-dance about her" (61). It is difficult not to interpret this dream as a manifestation of bourgeois anxieties about the masses (a "class") rising against her, an interpretation that is backed up by Myra's instinctive repulsion for the poor students of her class whom she thinks of as "rather stupid, rather dirty children [that] *smelled*—a thing she never forgave them" (original emphasis 64).

While Myra suffers for her forced association with the oppressed classes, Oppenheim describes Sally as the very "voice of the toilers at last dimly audible; she was the voice of a million years of sore labor and bitter poverty and thwarted life" (33). Sally is a definite working-class version of the New-Woman type who is "clean-cut, direct, such a positive character…hardy and self-contained, and would never be dependent" (289). In distinction from Evangeline or Martha of *By Bread Alone*, she holds real political influence. She inspires Joe to

become a socialist and activist himself, and he in turn inspires her to help catalyze a strike. In an image of perfect sex-comradeship, they work together on a radical newspaper and in support of the garment-worker uprising. However, when it comes to choosing a romantic partnership, Joe winds up breaking Sally's heart by marrying Myra.

Unlike *By Bread Alone*, wherein the work of the mill and the strike itself are vividly described, here the industrial plotline is told almost exclusively through the lens of the romantic one. Indeed, the strike plot is mediated to such a degree by the courtship story that it almost becomes a mere conduit through which to rehabilitate bourgeois sex, marriage, and family.[63] At the story's outset, Joe envisions his marriage to Myra along typical bourgeois lines: "He could get some nice house and make a home for her…there would be little children in the house…Joe felt that he had reached the heights of success, and he saw no obstacle to long years of solid advance" (8). He problematically assumes that it is his, "last step to success. Now he had all—his work, his love. He felt powerfully masculine, triumphant, glorious" (16). In a description of romantic love worthy of the most passionate courtship fiction, Joe and Myra's love unleashes their long-dormant sex instincts, their true manhood and womanhood: "the terror of nature's resistless purpose with men and women, that awful gravitation, that passion of creation that links worlds and uses men and women, went through them both" (11). At the same moment of his declaration of love for Myra, the fire at Joe's shop flares up, putting this bourgeois conception of marriage into crisis. Sally must first step in to put the lovers'

63 Oppenheim's next novel, *Idle Wives* (1913), takes a very similar tack. While it follows four women, three of whom are working class, Anne, the one suicidally-bored bourgeois house wife is the main psyche through which the action is refracted. She leaves her husband to live among the working class and reform prostitutes, a move that ultimately revitalizes her professional, personal, marital, and familial lives. In a telling moment, Anne mentions to her psychotherapist that she thinks that her and everyone else's personal issues might be part of a bigger systemic problem, and the doctor responds that Anne's socialist neighbor in the tenement and "his fellow workers will attend to that great problem, don't fear! The whole world is shaking with that storm: and nothing you can do will help or hinder" before steering her back to a personal interview (336).

"humanity" on trial before they can reunite to fully inhabit and reclaim their recuperated bourgeois man- and womanhood.

The horror of the fire puts Joe's life, that is, "the life of the average American," in question. He blames himself for the girls' deaths, concluding that he has effectively killed them in "his rush for success" (25). The rest of the novel documents his transformation from the "average man" who is "careless of all but his own gain" into the "social man" who is "careful of his fellow-men" (25). Joe's first step in this process is to go to Sally as the representative of the working class to be "cleansed" and have his guilt "expiated…by confessing it to his accuser and receiving her strange and gentle forgiveness" (39). But once he is "a free man again," and a "man renewed," he "doesn't need [Sally] any more" (39, 40, 292). Likewise, Myra realizes that she must rise up to "meet the test of these newer women" (235). She emerges from a retreat of many months at her parents' country home to enter the life of the city authentically for the first time through working on Joe's cause. Her final self-realization happens ironically through her appropriation of a working-class woman's story, which she stirringly recounts at a union meeting to raise funds for the strike.[64] After Myra's speech, Joe declares that she has "set [her]self free" and is "a new woman!" (297). The narrator is quick to affirm Joe's assessment: "That was all. She had shocked Joe with the fact of the new Myra, and now the new Myra had come to stay" (297).

It is possible that Joe and Myra's reunion at Sally's expense is intended to be a somewhat disappointing resolution, especially given the novel's seeming valorization of Sally and her modern ways. Joe's mother acknowledges that, "[Sally's] relationship with Joe always implied interdependence, a perfect give and take, a close yet easy comradeship…Sally was a

64 Notably, Myra's speech appeals to the union men through their desire to preserve pure womanhood, not their class solidarity, as she explains to them that it "'is not the easiest thing to live a normal woman's life'" (297).

woman of the future, and such a marriage would become a finer and freer union" (289). Joe likewise agrees that "Sally was of the new breed; she represented the new emancipation; the exodus of woman from the home to the battle-fields of the world; the willingness to fight in the open, shoulder to shoulder with men; the advance of a sex that now demanded a broader, freer life, a new health, a home built upon comradeship and economic freedom" (168). Joe moreover acknowledges that, "In all of these things [Sally] contrasted sharply with Myra, and Joe always thought of the two together" (168). In preventing Joe and Sally's marriage, the text might, on the one hand, register a middle-class ambivalence about the emancipation of workers and women and their impact on the future of the race, or, on the other, it might lament that such a union is not yet possible. However, the novel's ending suggests there might be other political incentives for Sally's dismissal.

Oppenheim tries to provide an apolitical explanation of the marriage plot through a mystical invocation of the romantic love popularized in courtship stories. The narrative accordingly represents the choice between Sally and Myra as just an irrational matter of the heart, determined by irrepressible primordial drives rather than sound reasoning or ideological priorities. Joe knows that there is a choice to be made between them, but "unconsciously Sally was always the fellow-worker" whereas "Myra—what Myra meant he could feel but not explain" (168). Similarly, when Myra sees Joe, "[s]omething deeper than the veneer of her culture overpowered her…her heart told her exultingly, 'You are a *woman'*" (65-66). She feels an "uprush of a wild love," and "the awakening of all her instincts of home and mating and childbearing" (66). Following the pervasive discourse of an all-consuming romantic love that is based on "natural" attraction, Oppenheim validates the idea that the heterosexual impulse is the

most basic, deeply-human part of identity. In spite of this deflection, Joe's romantic preference can also be seen as deeply cultural and ideological.[65]

That is, politically, Myra lets Joe take the lead while Sally does the leading. Myra comes to the Cause because of Joe and her social justice work is based on love and maternal instincts (i.e. her femininity) whereas Sally arrives long before Joe through the experience of economic oppression (i.e. her class). When Sally launches a wildcat strike of female shirt-waist workers, she does it explicitly in his name (196) but against his wishes and even his beliefs: "Joe had told her not to do it—that it would only stir up trouble—but Joe was too kindly. In the battles of the working people a time must come for cruelty, blows, and swift victory" (194). Her actions in defiance of Joe almost get him killed since he is soon after attacked by a mob of angry male workers who feel humiliated by women leading the charge against their bosses. If Sally's politics threaten Joe with bodily harm and degeneration, Myra's arrival has a palliative effect that helps "save" Joe from the ravages of his work.

Myra validates all the dominant scripts for class, race, gender, and sexuality; Sally does not. While a more sympathetic character overall, Sally still confirms the linkages between failed direct action, senseless violence, and the proletariat. It is therefore a class-based predisposition and an ideological bias—not a natural affinity—that determines the narrative's resolution. His choice of Myra symbolically aligns with Joe's ideological conclusions from his work on the radical newspaper and the strike, both of which he refers to as "The Greenwich Village experiment." The chapter breakdown of the novel is in fact arranged around the scientific method, invoking Joe's stance as the white male professional authority whose

65 Pamela Haag analyzes the reactionary gender politics of the "idealized, all-consuming love" (164) associated with early-twentieth-century sexual modernity in her chapter, "In Search of the 'Real Thing'." She likewise argues that this construction of romantic love was classed as well as gendered: "insofar as Americans of disparate income levels increasingly identified themselves as 'middle-class,' sexuality became not only reflective of materially based class differences, but also a constitutive component of class as a cultural category" (165).

perspective is ultimately endorsed by the narrative. His conclusions represent a departure from scientific socialism, that is, from the orthodox Marxist theory and tactics associated with Sally and the working-class movement. The ideas Sally taught Joe are the hypotheses of his experiment, but they have not in the end been proven.

Joe notes how he "had gone down to Greenwich Village crammed with theories; he had set to work as if he were a sheltered scientist in a quiet laboratory, where an experiment could be carried through, and there suddenly he had been confronted with Facts! Facts! Those queer unbudgable things!" (316). The "facts" he is confronted with include the extremely minimal gains of the grueling strike and the tragic undoing of "decent" factory owners whose workers were forced out by the union. Thus, against orthodox, bifurcated understandings of class and historical change, Joe ultimately asserts that, "[i]n the intricacy of civilization there are no real divisions" (300). He realizes that reality is "quite different from that sharp twofold world of the workers and the money-power." Instead, it is, "a world of infinite gradations, a world merely the child of the past, where high and low were pushed by the resistless pressure of environment, and lives were shaped by birth, chance, training, position, and a myriad, myriad indefinable forces" (300). Consequently, he understands that significant social change, "will take worlds of time; it will take a multitude of striving; it will take unnumbered forces—education, health-work, eugenics, town-planning, the rise of women, philanthropy, law—a thousand thousand dawning powers" (316).

In other words, the type of deep, inarticulate life force sparked in Myra and Joe's love comes to define reality and a living politics for Joe: "Life itself—not our interpretation—is the great out-working force! No future can be predicted!" (317). In his embrace of this multiplicity, contingency, and irreducible complexity, the narrator concludes: "In short, he had reached his social manhood—which meant to him, not dogma, but the willingness to arise every morning

ready to reshape his course" (317). Sally, then, is associated with a set, predetermined course, with an orthodox, class-struggle approach to socialism. Hers is a sterile, isolated doctrine that is not yet productive or fully acquainted with Life, and so, as she herself suggests, Joe and Myra have "outgrown" her and their romantic notions about the proletarian revolution bringing about socialism through class struggle (292). Sally goes off to organize another strike while Joe remains with Myra to slowly construct the new world together, willing to settle for "add[ing] our one stone to [the] rising walls" of the New City of "five million comrades" wrought in Joe's imagination.

A similar story unfolds in John MacMahon's *Toilers and Idlers* (1907): a capitalist's son goes to work in a steel mill out of sheer boredom only to find that he in fact owns the foundry where he ends up leading a strike against himself. Rensen, yet another heroically-reformed capitalist, must choose between Madeline, the promising, independent artist with a PreRaphaelite-esque beauty, and Sonia, the young, spirited ladies' garment worker and labor leader with anarchistic leanings and "boyish" good looks. Madeline is from a bourgeois if parochial background as the daughter of a country judge; Sonia is an orphaned Jewish immigrant raised in utter poverty. It should be obvious by now that the latter is no more than a transitory flirtation for the hero both literally and symbolically.

Sonia, who is a hybrid of Sophia of *By Bread Alone* and Sally of *The Nine-Tenths*, is aligned with a secret, revolutionary organization that she announces is opposed to political compromise of any kind but in favor of "the social structure [being] razed to the ground" (169). Ominously, those in her group "lead mobs," "wreck buildings," and are secretly gathering arms all over the country with the full intention to "use the rifles en masse when that becomes necessary" (170). Rensen's dismissal of her indicates his own more sympathetic right-wing commitments to social change through "evolution," "the propaganda of education," and

"peaceful regeneration" (169-170). The novel encourages the reader to treat Sonia's misguided ideas sympathetically, as an understandable product of her personal suffering. Unfortunately, this perspective implies that it is precisely her exploitation as a female immigrant garment worker that disqualifies her from the proper political authority necessary to improve her and other workers' conditions.

Madeline at first is enamored of Sonia, "hysterically" joining a mob that she helps stir up to destroy Rensen's foundry. However, during this episode, Rensen literally saves Madeline from joining the workers literally or ideologically, by forcibly seizing her and "shoulder[ing] and bully[ing] a passage through the dense, warm, odorous mass of bodies" to escape (157). He then proceed to scold her, informing her that he is "shocked," to see her " 'acting without reason…with a lot of crazy, ignorant women'" before explaining how her destruction of his property has had absolutely no ameliorative effect on the situation at hand (158). Afterwards, when the strike is resolved by Rensen's transforming his foundry into a worker-owned cooperative, he is sorry to find that so few of his workers actually understand or sympathize with his bigger goal of gradually building towards the cooperative commonwealth. The closing scene depicts Rensen giving a idealistic socialist speech at the foundry's inaugural banquet, only to be left cold when he realizes "that the men, except a few…did not seem altogether to comprehend…[his] ideas and general purposes" (194). Just when he is on the brink of despair due to the obtuseness of the working class, the "answer to [his] mystic call and cry" comes from the transformed artist Madeline, who "alone" responds: "'I believe; I go with you and help you'" (195).

Rensen's romantic inclination towards and reformation of Madeline indicate her desirability is based on her refined plasticity and status as an artist. When Rensen initially encounters the gaunt unstylish Madeline fresh from the country, he recognizes her potential

beauty and talent, both of which are richly fulfilled by the end of the novel. Her attractiveness is in her ability to change and be shaped (by him). By contrast, the working-class women who participate in the mob are described as being permanently marked by their condition. Rensen dwells upon their "set faces" and "youthful wrinkles," noticing one woman with a "nose oddly mutilated" and another with a distinctive "scar on her upper lip" (154-156). These working women, like Sonia, seem beyond hope or redemption. Instead, Rensen turns to an artist to help him realize his vision of the cooperative commonwealth, the ideal union for his "propaganda of education." Such alliances between reformers and artists demonstrate socialist investments in literature, art, and cultural production as means to social change. They also demonstrate socialist novelists' rejection of worker self-organization and direct action as well as their failure to imagine substantive proletarian cultural production or a vibrant working-class culture. If the novels discussed thus far repeatedly draw sharp aesthetic distinctions between their female representatives of the bourgeoisie and working classes that favor the former, this aesthetic bias aligns with their assumptions about class-based capacities for artistic production.

The aesthetic asymmetries between bourgeois and working-class women in the cross-class love triangle also establish linkages between normative constructions of gender and constructivist socialist politics. While the women representing capital all ravishingly fulfill the established ideals of womanhood, the representatives of labor are always a bit queer: too sensual, too androgynous, too ethnic. Every time the hero recommits himself to his bourgeois heroine, he reaffirms that stable and clearly recognizable gender norms are the basis and/or consequence of stable and clearly defined political strategies. Sexual anarchy is thrown out along with economic and political anarchy, thereby naturalizing both the sanctioned models of gender and socialist politics.

C. THE RADICAL POTENTIAL OF MARRIAGE PLOTS

The problem I have identified in novels like *The Nine Tenths* is not necessarily their embrace of "complexity" or nonviolence but how such ideological commitments are repeatedly positioned to disavow any form of direct action and disenfranchise working-class people from leading their own struggles.[66] Tellingly, the myriad "dawning powers" that Joe indicates are part of the struggle for social progress (education, healthcare, eugenics, urban planning, the Women's Movement, philanthropy, law) are all bourgeois and/or authoritarian institutions, many of them associated with the PMC (316). Ultimately, then, such complexity and contingency in socialist marriage plots tends to re-authorize the white, middle-class male professional at a time when his position of social dominance is being put into question.

The marriages themselves also reinforce this "benevolent" authority insofar as the wives accept their political objectives. In this way, most socialist marriage plots partake in the "lover-mentor" convention popular in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a genre that tracked the progress of "reformed heroines" in novels that "were about learning to repudiate faults seen as specially feminine, and accepting male authority instead of challenging it" (Spencer 143). Women are associated with bourgeois culture in this instance; reforming them means converting them to socialism. Consequently, the negative elements of bourgeois and Victorian culture are feminized, and socialism is associated with modern, masculine authority.

66 Perhaps the underlying question is something like: when is "complexity" politically useful and when is it a bourgeois cop-out? This discussion is very similar to that of Chapter Four, except that here, complexity is associated with the authority of white, middle-class men and preserves existing social hierarchies whereas in the texts discussed in the last chapter, women and working-class characters are allowed authority and agency. In *Comrade Yetta*, for instance, the Sally character (not the Joe character) is the organizing consciousness of the novel, and her epiphany about the contingency and complexity of life is brought about by her devastating rejection of the white, middle-class professional who is her first love.

As I have repeatedly pointed out, these "opportunist" marriage plots, especially insofar as they validate authoritarian socialism, tend to be sexist and classist, advocating a patriarchal, top-down politics. However, I do not want to entirely dismiss their radical potential or make light of the potentially useful interventions and critiques they offer. In a basic sense, they overtly politicize the courtship-story genre or what Sinclair describes as the publishers' prescription to "use [one's] passion…to describe two society-people mating" (*Love's* 161). While the "fairy-tale" romances of courtship stories served in part to conceal their ideological agenda, socialists' adaptations of the genre helped render visible its political dimensions. While the "idealized, all-consuming love" of modern marriage was commonly billed as being wholly immune from extrinsic factors like politics or class, these novels foreground such factors in their expositions of the romantic plotlines. Thus, socialist marriage plots may not ultimately displace white middle-class male hegemony, but they do seriously question the individualistic and materialistic values inculcated by courtship stories by recasting success in terms of collective social progress rather than individual attainment. They do, in other words, make a cultural intervention that significantly disrupts the covert reproduction of capitalist values insofar as they seek to transform the ideals of the top and the PMC audience.

Likewise, their gender politics are not wholly reactionary. If wives do often fulfill the role of the "converted" mentees, the notions that women should have anything to do with politics, that men should care about their political beliefs, or that politics should have any bearing on one's domestic affairs could be seen as radical in themselves. According to historian Aileen Kraditor's statistical analysis, only one out of every thirty male members of the SP "brought in" female friends or family members, which she reasonably argues is evidence that many socialists at the time "did not consider socialism relevant to what went on in the home" and "believed socialism had to do only with the public sphere" (197).

While the novels I have described tend to validate prevailing gender norms, their focus on marriage and love as tactics also grant a certain authority to women. Even if male authors and characters most often set the vision for the cooperative commonwealth, female characters are almost always the ones who propose "love" as a solution to the social problems to which men have introduced them. That is not to say that "love" is discredited as viable means of social transformation—on the contrary, as the repeated promotion of the cross-class marriage as an alternative to the strike shows, it often winds up being the endorsed method.[67] As the hero's soon-to-be-wife insists to her cynical lover in Elias Tobenkin's *Witte Arrives* (1916), "There is a way out…If *men* would only see it…Love—that is the way out…We must all follow the voice of love…" (my emphasis 302).

Furthermore, in critiquing some of the conservative, right-wing tendencies in socialist marriage plots, I do not mean to imply that the "revolutionary" left wing of the Party did not have its patriarchal and authoritarian strains. The authoritarian policies of Daniel DeLeon's left-wing SLP were in fact the reason why many of its members defected to the SP in the first place. The SP initially was built on the freedom of the press and independent thought that many members felt were being suppressed by the left wing of the SLP. Indeed, the radical potential of these novels might be located precisely in their critique of left-wing Party orthodoxy and a masculinist rhetoric of class war. If socialist marriage plots register a distrust of the working class, they also challenge the left wing's unconditional "worship of the worker" and deep "distrust of anything not emanating from the proletariat" (Shannon 40, 38).

Socialist marriage plots, then, often did not strictly adhere to the tenets of Marxist socialism but meaningfully pointed out an alternative conception of agency. Feminist critiques

67 Love is a traditionally feminine value, so this association between women and love as a tactic could harken back to the Victorian construction of the feminine ideal, which granted women moral authority.

of Marxist class struggle, such as those offered by J.K. Gibson-Graham, have pointed out the essentializing and masculinist tendencies of a binary class system that privileges a conception of social change akin to a "military confrontation" (57-58). Such totalizing conceptions of class "discourage a politics of local and continual class transformation and make it difficult to imagine or enact social diversity in the dimension of class" (Gibson-Graham 58). These potentially radical and feminist interventions in socialist and mainstream politics are perhaps not surprisingly most pronounced in the few socialist marriage-plot novels written by women, such as Charlotte Teller's *The Cage*, Susan Glaspell's *The Visioning*, and Theresa Malkiel's *The Diary of a Shirtwaist Striker*.

The Cage (1906) by Charlotte Teller[68] presents yet another love triangle, but this time the novel makes Frederica Hartwell, the working-class daughter of a social gospel minister, as the protagonist with two romantic prospects, both upper-class. Her first suitor is Eugene Harden, a foreign aristocrat who wants to be a "general" in the class war on the side of the proletariat starting with a strike in a Chicago lumberyard. The competitor for her affections is the lumber baron's lazy son who eventually finds his manhood and stands up for his father's employees. His reform, however, happens too late to secure Frederica's affections, and so she marries Eugene.

Akin to other SP marriage plots, the narrative draws upon another violent labor-related uprising for its historical context: the events surrounding the Haymarket bombing and its

68 Charlotte Teller (1876-1953) was a graduate of University of Chicago from an affluent family who lived the life of a struggling author until her death. She became active in the SP while in New York where she survived with the help of the patronage of Mark Twain among others. At the time she wrote *The Cage*, she was separated from her first husband and living in an artists' cooperative.

aftermath.[69] The Haymarket Affair creates bitter disillusionment for the novel's romantic hero, Eugene Harden, both about the labor movement and his marriage as it marks the riotous disintegration of the strike he is leading and Frederica's first distrust of him when he is indirectly accused of the bombing. In other words, both the workers and his wife question his authority and so he consequently loses all faith in them. Aligning economic and domestic struggles, his simultaneous experiences of social and personal tumult "revealed the limitations of a fledgling democracy" to him (309). Frederica, however, remains undaunted by these setbacks and challenges. Unlike in *By Bread Alone*, in which the revelation of limitations has no impact on the certitude of Blair's political theory or authority, Frederica and Eugene's reconciliation is based on an acceptance of doubt and irreducible complexity, an acceptance that Frederica helps bring about. Frederica effectively softens the macho, orthodox *Hard*-en, challenging his monolithic authority through her own self assertion, appropriately enough, while wearing a specially-made dress of shimmering, multi-layered gray (316-321). The novel ends with their true, spiritual "moment of marriage," which takes place long after the literal ceremony and is "sprung from the unknown," forged out of "a sense of the incomprehensible things in life…[and an] undertone of questioning" (337).

The Visioning (1911) by Susan Glaspell—an author best known today for her feminist one-act "Trifles" (1916)—is another example in which the marriage plot concludes with a more egalitarian romantic model that takes orthodoxy to task in favor of political compromise. In the novel, Glaspell recounts the story of well-off "army girl" Katie Jones whose frivolous existence is shaken up when she decides to "save" a chorus girl who is about to commit suicide.

69 On May 4, 1886, a bomb was thrown during a confrontation between workers and police at a demonstration for the eight-hour day that resulted in eleven deaths. Eight anarchists were falsely accused of conspiracy, and seven of them were given death sentences, four of which were very publically carried out at the gallows in November of 1887. These events made the accused men martyrs in radical circles, but also tended to reinforce popular associations between anarchism, the labor movement, and violence.

The beautiful working-class girl, Ann Forrest,[70] serves as Katie's gateway to the ugly social realities from which she has been sheltered. Once exposed, Katie gets help interpreting this distressing social reality from a local working man whom she initially refers to only with the moniker "the man who mends boats" (an occupation that could easily be symbolic of his role in righting our societal ship). The upper-class heroine eventually overcomes the social pressures of her bourgeois upbringing to marry her working-class mentor, Alan Mann, in a union which "given the constraints of the domestic fiction genre…virtually guarantees a conversion to bring the two lovers into ideological harmony" (Stretch 227). Alan's last name also suggests such a "conversion" plot since Katie's adoption of the socialist perspective corresponds with her growing love of "Mann" (in both its gendered and supposedly gender-neutral formulations). The novel's conclusion, however, suggests that she has not adopted his beliefs wholesale, but rather that they collaborate to re-vision socialism together as a movement based on love rather than antagonism. The last scene finds Katie with her husband out for a day trip to an island to celebrate their marriage. As they are hiking around, Alan tells her to walk in a "little sunny path" that seems inviting, and her refusal to do so quickly becomes a metaphor for her relinquishing her privilege for the benefit of others.

> Laughingly he pushed her over into the narrow strip of sunshine, where there was just room for Katie's feet. But Katie shook her head. 'What do I care about sunny paths if I must walk them alone?' And, laughing, too, but with a deepening light in her eyes, she held out her hand to him. But it was such a narrow sunny path; there was not room for two. So Katie made room for him by stepping part way out of the sunshine herself. (462)

Such a sacrifice as relinquishing her exclusive claim to the "sunny paths," is also (as has been liberally hinted at throughout the novel) a gain in knowledge (since the "dark" is associated with reality) and in morality (since she finally acknowledges that keeping to the sunny side of

70 Katie actually devises the refined name "Ann Forrest," from the girl's tacky show name, Verna Woods. Her real name is Sarah, but she goes by Ann the whole time.

life means barring others from it). The new couple goes on to picture the many sunny and mild, dark and steep roads ahead of them, imagery that evokes a gradual, arduous process of social change (rather than a violent, cataclysmic revolution). "Love" is the anecdote for social injustice and the catalyst for social transformation toward a "vision" that is unveiled through their cross-class coupling. Prior to their wedding, Alan and Katie were in constant disagreement about whether class struggle or cooperation was the appropriate means to revolutionizing society, but their marriage tips the argument in Katie's favor. The novel concludes with the "visioning" promised in the title, which is catalyzed by Katie:

> There rose before her vision of a possible day when all would understand; when none would wish another ill or work another harm; when war and oppression and greed must cease, not because the laws forbade them, but because men's hearts gave them no place. 'I see it!' she whispered unconsciously. Her face was touched with the fine light of visioning.
>
> 'See what—dear Katie? Take me in.'
>
> 'The world when love has saved it!' She remembered their old dispute and her arms went about his neck as she told him again: 'Why 'tis love must save the world!'
>
> He held her face in his two hands as if he could not look deeply enough. And as he looked into her eyes, a nobler light was in his own.
>
> 'As it has saved us,' he whispered.
>
> They grew very still, hushed by the wonder of it. In their two hearts there seemed love enough to redeem the world. (463-464)

Their love emphasizes the difficult "process" of social change through their tumultuous courtship and Katie's painful personal transformation—their union is an ongoing "visioning" rather than a static vision. The novel, on the one hand, then, de-emphasizes class organization and collective action in favor of what could be seen as an individualistic and utopian alternative. However, in doing so, it also offers the possibility of the "more self-conscious and self-transformative class subjectivity" and "politics of local and continual class transformation" called for by post-Marxist feminists such as Gibson-Graham (53). Feminists' interest in cross-class solidarity as seen in the marriage plot marked their desire for equality and cooperation

between the sexes (instead of antagonism and struggle since the final triumph of one side was obviously not desirable).

The flip side of the feminist analysis, however, is that the love that has "saved" them and is poised to "redeem the world" is of a distinctly romantic and heterosexual variety—a turn away from sisterhood to "Mann." Such romantic tropes offer a marked variation of the tropes and values put forth by Stowe and Christian socialists of brotherly and motherly love that minimized the sexual connotations and threats of mixing or queerness/sameness embedded in universal brotherhood. *The Visioning* actually takes an abrupt turn towards this romantic love since the bulk of the story involves Katie's much more compelling and complex cross-class relationship with Ann. As critic Cynthia Stretch aptly observes, "ultimately, Katie and Ann's relationship acts as a filter which refracts both mainstream and socialist narratives," revising the prevailing discourses of gender and class that underwrite them (Stretch 229). If Katie brings some of these re-articulations with her into her marriage with Mann, the narrative still resolves itself by forgoing gender solidarity for the sake of traditional domestic arrangements.

Ann, too, winds up in a cross-class marriage Katie's brother. Katie's marriage is juxtaposed with that of Ann and that of her rebellious cousin Fred to a straight-shooting western woman, Helen. Ann turns out to be a traditionalist content to make her home her universe, "too happy in her own life to get excited about the world" (447). Helen is a full-on New Woman who resists "manly authority" and insists upon "the economic independence of woman" (133). She alarms Katie with her insistence on maintaining her job in the forest service after her marriage (133) and bewilders Ann with how she "doesn't seem afraid of anything and wants to do such a lot of things to the world" (447). Katie remains somewhere in between the two, always fluctuating between a reverence for the past and the values of her upbringing and a

zest for the future and her kindling modern ideas. Katie, her cross-class marriage, and their mutual negotiation of socialist theory thus represent the ultimate middle-road compromise.

Overall, *The Visioning* offers some feminist interventions in taking on masculine domination but still gives the bourgeoisie the say-so on socialism. Glaspell's eventual husband, George Cram Cook, published the novel *The Chasm* in the same year as *The Visioning*, to which it bears a considerable resemblance in its narrative and ideological outcomes. Cook ends his novel by having his capitalist's daughter tease the young labor leader she is set to marry: "You class-struggle socialists seem to be the only ones who now desire to end [the profit-system]. But wouldn't it be a lovely joke on you if the private owners of the world's industry should themselves see it ought to be socialized—and do it themselves?" (361).

Only in Theresa Malkiel's 1910 novella published by a socialist press, *The Diary of a Shirtwaist Striker*, does the socialist marriage plot seriously challenge both bourgeois and masculine authority.[71] Interestingly enough, from our contemporary horizon of expectations, the working-class marriage plot in Malkiel's *Diary*, seems like it should logically be the norm. Instead of foregrounding class cooperation, the marriage trope could easily have been deployed as a symbol for the SP's plan to create a "two-arm" approach in which the political and economic interests of labor would cooperate. Eugene V. Debs, the SP's candidate for President throughout the Progressive era, urgently hoped that radical economic and political objectives, as represented respectively by the labor and socialist movements, could be "brought into

71 Theresa Malkiel was a former factory worker who married a socialist lawyer, Leon Malkiel. She remained active in the labor movement, participating on many strike committees. She and her husband were also extremely active in the SP's New York Local where she served on the Women's Committee and consistently fought to include women's rights as a key part of the SP platform and agitation efforts. Socialist Party of America (New York Local) Meeting Minutes; R7124-10; VI: 5; Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, Elmer Holmes Bobst Library, New York University Libraries.

harmonious relation" (115).[72] *Diary* involves a marriage that symbolizes such an industrial-political alliance. While Malkiel's narrator, Mary, is on strike, her fiancé, Jim, attends meetings, "spends his evening reading and then tells [her] all about the things he finds in these numerous books and pamphlets" (63). Jim educates her with the necessary political theory and Mary in turn provides him with her "knowledge from the book of life" (63). Hence, the marriage plot in *Diary* offers a progressive model of sex comradeship, working-class solidarity, and the "two-arm" approach. As we have seen, this is by no means the most common symbolic valence for socialist marriage plots, which only infrequently feature working-class marriages.[73] In fact, *The Jungle* (1906), *The House of Bondage* (1910), *The Valley of the Moon* (1913), and *Comrade Yetta* (1913) are the only other novels written by members of the SP to centrally feature working-class marriages at all.[74]

Malkiel's story is revolutionary (or left-wing) and feminist-socialist in its orientation, giving a voice to women and workers in its colloquial first-person narrative. Inverting the typical gender roles, Mary not only converts her beau Jim into a labor activist and socialist but

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72 Eugene Debs famously said in his speech at the founding of the IWW in 1905: "If this work is properly begun, it will mean in time, and not a long time at that, a single union upon the economic field. It will mean more than that; it will mean a single party upon the political field; the one the economic expression, the other the political expression of the working class; the two halves that represent the organic whole of the labor movement" (Debs 118). Elsewhere he refers to men and women in a similar way: "man and woman are merely halves of humanity, each requiring the qualities of the other in order to attain the highest character" (quoted in Currie 104).

73 The lack of attention paid to working-class couples in socialist novels is in line with what Ohmann points out as the tendency of courtship stories as a whole: "even those courtship stories that propel a working class person into the sphere of narrative interest manage to stick to what I consider the real subject of this genre: affinities and relations within and between the two main higher classes, and especially the rosy prospects of the PMC at this fluid moment in history" (Ohmann 320-321). In *The Monarch Billionaire*, for instance, a woman representing new money and a man representing old money marry to successfully team up against the woman's mega-capitalist father to get his workers to help usher in the cooperative commonwealth.

74 And, of these novels, only *Yetta* might be considered a marriage plot though it makes considerable interventions in the courtship story genre, which will be discussed in the fourth chapter. The marriage in *Yetta* is similar to that of *Diary*, featuring a "two-arm" union between a theory-oriented socialist lawyer/politician/editor and a experience-oriented factory worker/labor-organizer/writer.

also proposes marriage to him (81). The narrative ends with the women winning the strike (95) and Mary anticipating her happy marriage with Jim, her true "comrade" (96). Gains for workers' rights, then, correspond with gains in women's rights *and* genuine romantic fulfillment. Moreover, unlike in *The Visioning*, her marriage does not compromise her gender solidarity or overlook collective action—Mary plans for her and Jim to move in with the destitute family of her Jewish immigrant coworker, Ray, to help pay their rent. Mary also wants to keep working in order to hold Ray's position until she can return to work from an illness (96).

Typical socialist marriage plots dramatize their gradualist orientations through their continuities with the past, recognition of current cultural norms, and depictions of protagonists who are unable or unwilling to make a clean break from their bourgeois families and upbringings. By contrast, Malkiel's Mary rejects any necessary allegiance to past or present values. Her break from them is demonstrated by her determination to never forgive or go back to her conservative father after he "scorned [her] ideals, mocked [her] hopes, threatened [her] freedom and drove [her] away from under his roof" in response to her spending a week in jail for being arrested on the picket line (87). Throughout the diary, she only becomes more confirmed in her resolve never to yield to patriarchy or capitalism, making no concessions to her boss, to her father, to her beau, or to the bourgeois League women or sexist union men who are trying to run her strike.

Mary's sweeping the boards with uncompromising economic and romantic victories is undeniably inspirational propaganda that upholds a feminist, antiracist, socialist agenda. Then

again, this rosy conclusion might be seen as naïve or unrealistic.[75] The "constructivist" perspective illustrated in most socialist marriage plots responded to the very real, very slow pace of social change, offering consolation for failed or minimally-successful labor uprisings that were not just threatening to the bourgeois but also devastating to workers. The heroes of novels such as *By Bread Alone*, *Toilers and Idlers*, and *The Nine Tenths* are so enthusiastic about their conversions to socialism that they think they can bring about the cooperative commonwealth overnight. In this light, socialist courtship stories, which often conclude with significant defeats for labor, tend to end with chastened expectations for the radical transformation of society and commitments to working within the system (be it industrial capitalism, electoral politics, or marriage) to slowly transform them from the inside. However, they also provide consolation for those chastened expectations and disheartening first efforts in the marriage itself, as it allows couples to experience in a small way the fully-realized, creative human life and golden age of fellowship they project under the cooperative commonwealth.

Mary does not feel the same let-down as the typical privileged socialist hero because she is converted to socialism through her experience as a worker and striker, not through a theoretical conviction and therefore the Truth of her political theory never has to be bust to pieces by reality or cemented into stubborn orthodoxy.

D. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, though most socialist marriage plots retreated from their more radical implications, they were a step towards thinking about intersectional politics and the potential

75 If Mary's complete personal and industrial triumphs seem a bit idealistic, she does at least acknowledge that she is an exceptional case. Many of the other women strikers do not come out as well. They watch their families starve, face deathly illness, and commit suicide. Mary, then, is a model of the possibilities.

for solidarity across difference. Marriage plots focused much needed attention on blindspots in official party politics by raising gender and domesticity as topics of theoretical concern. By using marriage as a symbol and tactic for socialist politics, these novels created a model for self-transformation that allowed for individual agency, putting into question the disempowering environmentalist and inevitable-ist perspectives of orthodox socialists without necessarily undermining the collective and cooperative values of socialism. They promoted nonviolent methods of social change that acknowledged the power of ideas and culture and potentially resisted misogynistic rhetorics of class warfare. In destabilizing neatly-bifurcated class models, socialist novelists dramatized the ways in which class categories and relations are much more conditional and complex than the traditional Marxist model contained in the pledge that they had to sign to become members of the Party.[76] The more complex understanding of class registered in these novels is in part based on their conscious or unconscious acknowledgement of its intersectional nature, particularly with respect to gender.

On the other hand, many socialist marriage plots manifested deep anxieties about the very social transformations in which they participated. They conveyed misgivings about the power of oppressed classes, such as the proletariat and women, as well as about their authors' own relative privilege in association with those classes. Often, they wound up shying away from their own suggestions of egalitarian socialism and reverted back to a benevolent authoritarianism. Ultimately, then, they exhibited a failure to imagine how the nonviolent and cooperative methods advocated by constructivist socialists could be conceived of or taken up by working-class people or instituted by democratic proceedings.

76 Applicants to the SP had to sign a statement verifying that they "recognize[ed] the class struggle between the capitalist class and the working class" before they were admitted to membership.

Because many socialist marriage plots are so obviously problematic from the vantage point of today, some critics have suggested that they exhibited a failure to imagine socialism altogether. Laura Hapke, for instance, describes this type of novel as only "superficially radical but commercially viable" (151) while Peter Conn derides the genre as "preponderantly emotional and only marginally ideological," characterized by fiction in which socialist politics are "simplified, subordinated, and often suppressed" (95, 93). Conn goes so far as to link the very failure of socialism in the early-twentieth-century U.S. to "the transformations inflicted upon socialist ideology by many of its most influential literary and intellectual proponents" (93).[77] Such assessments are misguided for several reasons. For one, these critics assume socialism is a relatively stable ideology that operates outsides the beliefs and practices of its particular adherents. They use Marx or contemporary standards as yardsticks by which to measure the ideological authenticity or validity of a given text. Thus, they presume that conventional or popular aesthetics and values are "inflicted" upon socialist ideology instead of intrinsic to certain strains of socialist thought and strategy.

It is inaccurate to say that these novels are simply misguided or dramatically compromised versions of socialism that are the result of either their authors' theoretical misapprehensions or deliberate appeals to popular audiences and aesthetics. On the contrary, the analysis in this chapter shows that the ideological ramifications of these novels reflected and shaped central currents rather than marginal or irrelevant strains of thought within the Party. If both Hapke and Conn see the "relatively conventional domestic resolution[s]" to socialist marriage plots as "decisive retreat[s]" from politics (Conn 98, Hapke 151-155), my reassessment of these novels demonstrates conversely that SP courtship stories not only

77 I am highly dubious of the implication in Conn's critique that socialism would have been a more successful political movement in the U.S. if only American socialists would have produced more cogently Marxist fiction.

remain highly interested in socialist politics but that their "conventional domestic resolutions" are in fact the sites of their *most* decisive political interventions.

Far from being aberrant cultural productions, then, many of the values and strategic orientations suggested by socialist marriage plots would later be institutionalized in SP policy. For instance, the dismissal of strikes in these novels anticipated the National Executive Committee's 1912 resolution against "industrial sabotage" that indirectly institutionalized right-wing tactics, disenfranchising many of the Party's working-class constituents along with its left wing in a bid for greater voter appeal. Hence, if the "marriage trope" initially suggested the coalition that formed the Party itself, the "love triangle" trope depicted in SP courtship stories—which necessitated the rejection of working-class lovers and their agitation in the industrial arena—would quickly become the more accurate metaphor for the Party's historical trajectory. Indeed, the "voluntary union" between its right and left wings became increasingly dysfunctional, particularly in the wake of perceived popular gains in the 1912 presidential election that marked the height of the SP's electoral clout with six percent of the overall vote. The deployment of the marriage trope in socialist courtship stories to instead primarily represent cross-class cooperation or alliances between the middle-class public and the right wing of the SP anticipates the latter's increasing dominance in the Party as it became more centralized (and, in a sense, more authoritarian) in its organization. The right wing would eventually go on to take majority control, rejecting many of the more radical elements as they sought more adamantly to "court" middle-class, mainstream support, a suit that ultimately failed as the Party saw their electoral gains dramatically diminished rather than enlarged in subsequent years.

III. CHAPTER 2. SEXUAL SELECTION FOR SOCIALISM: (R)EVOLUTIONARY ROMANCES

"It was all written down in the unsealed books of evolution" – Isaac Kahn Friedman, *The Radical* (1907)[78]

The Socialist Party regularly distinguished itself from previous iterations of well-meaning but misguided American radicalism by purporting to espouse *scientific*—rather than "utopian"—socialism. While Marx and Engels had set the precedent for such a distinction in *The Communist Manifesto*, for many in the SP, their version of "scientific socialism" was as informed by the natural and social sciences as it was by Marx's economic science. American socialists of the time period tended to draw upon the work of the likes of Henry Lewis Morgan, Charles Darwin, and Herbert Spencer as often as they did upon Marx and Engels.[79]

Indeed, most early-twentieth-century American socialists agreed with the epigraph that the socialist future was already "all written down in the unsealed books of evolution," but what exactly those supposedly open, prognostic texts said remained an intense subject of debate. This debate brought into focus some of the predominant tensions and assumptions within the

78 Pg. 362

79 The offerings of the largest socialist publisher, the Charles Kerr Cooperative Publishing Company, illustrates the SP's investment in natural and social science as radical theory. They produced an extensive International Library of Social Science and Library of Science for Workers, and books from these collections were frequently advertised side by side with works of socialist theory and economics under the heading of "What to Read on Socialism" or "Socialist Classics."

SP about who counted as part of the revolutionary class of the proletariat,[80] how social change would happen, and what the resulting socialist future should look like. The most basic conflict, which would eventually help define the left versus right wings of the Party, was between cataclysmic versus gradualist understandings of evolution. The former position—generally associated with direct action, strikes, class war, and revolution[81]—assumed socialism would mean a sudden rupture or clean break from capitalism; the latter assumed a steady, rational advance towards socialism and so was generally associated with electoral politics, peaceable development and compromise, cooperation, and reform. The more convoluted and opaque evolutionary controversy involved the relative influence of hereditary versus environmental factors in individual development and human civilization, a conflict that did not break down neatly along typical sectional lines and often remained tenuous to contradictory even at the level of individual perspectives. Socialists' favoring of Lamarck (whose primary contribution to evolutionary science was "use-inheritance," or, the theory that acquired traits were assumed to be passed on to one's offspring) effectively blurred the distinction between genetic and environmental influences.[82] Moreover, as socialist leaders such as Morris Hillquit, Ernest

80 Historian Ira Kipnis discusses such debates over who counted as the proletariat: "Having agreed that the SP's function was to create a public sympathetic to socialist ideas, elect as many Socialists to office as possible, and help inaugurate political and economic reforms in step with 'the march of civilization,' the next question facing the Right-wing leaders was who to educate. The answer continued to be the 'proletariat.' But proletariat now meant to the amalgamated Right wing what it had always meant to the Wisconsin Socialists—skilled craftsmen, small farmers, intellectuals, and small producers and merchants. At times, 'proletariat' even included the capitalist class, that is, the class of great industrialists and financiers which had furnished the socialist movement with 'some of the brightest minds, the noblest hearts, and the cleanest souls of the age in which we live'" (226-227).

81 These tactics, while based on collective, mass action, still presuppose that a form of competition is the primary mechanism of evolutionary advances.

82 Lamarck's concept of "use inheritance" was important to socialists since it meant that reforms would have a significant impact on the next generation and things like class consciousness could be inherited. On the other hand, feminist socialists like Charlotte Perkins Gilman could argue that women were at one point inherently superior to men, but environmental (rather than biological) factors had forced an evolutionary regression.

Untermann, and Kate Richards O'Hare illustrated, it was just as easy to discriminate against particular races due to their "backward" environment as it was to discriminate against them for inherent inferiority.

The collapse of evolutionary and Marxist theory was not wholly unsupported by Marx, who was a Darwin enthusiast and referred to "the development[83] of the economic formation of society" as a "process of natural history" (*Capital* 92). However, the intense emphasis and even privileging of evolutionary theory as well as the particular referents in Morgan, Spencer, and Lamark were unique to American socialism. Due to the popularization of Darwinism at the end of the nineteenth century, U.S. social movements all across the political spectrum drew upon evolutionary science for their rhetorical and theoretical underpinnings, but no one did so more fervently than the SP (Pittenger 4). Thus, socialists' use of evolution helped give their politics public legitimation and appeal, but these advantages would eventually come at a great cost. For one, it was difficult to argue that a ubiquitous scientific discourse was "radical," and for another, they were firmly roping their movement to scientific "truths" that were soon to be revised or overturned. Moreover, these "truths" tended to compromise their radical projects tactically by stressing historical inevitability in such a way that discouraged individual or collective agency. Such a faith in the scientific certainty of a socialist future was no doubt a short-term source of consolation and hope for Party members—as popular SP speaker Lena Morrow Lewis confided in a reporter, "If the spread of socialism depended on conversion, I would quit tomorrow"[84]—but their theories, strategies, and long-term morale were

83 Appropriately enough, this word, "entwicklung," is translated as "evolution" in the 1905 Charles Kerr edition of *Capital* edited by Ernest Untermann.

84 "Socialist Speaker Says She Appeals to Hearers' Reason," in *The Los Angeles Times* 4 October 1913.

undermined by seeing their movement as just helping along the inevitable progress of evolution.

Since Darwin never held any such belief in inevitable progress nor ever explicitly extended his work to offer an all-encompassing "theory of everything," Herbert Spencer was one of the most popular evolutionary references for early American socialists. Though his politics became increasingly conservative over his lifetime and were never in line with socialism, Spencer's model provided the type of unified theory of everything that could render all natural, economic, and social realities coherent. With their monistic and teleological tendencies, such grand narratives were wonderfully appealing to turn-of-the-century radicals. [85] Spencer saw natural, social, and economic development as unidirectional, all tending towards increasing complexity, coherence, and perfection. For Spencer this rosy future state was spontaneous self-organization and capitalism, for the SP, state-planning and socialism.

Besides being a popularizer of the term "evolution" itself,[86] the language of "fitness" so rampant in turn-of-the-century social scientific discourse was greatly inspired by Spencer. He was the one to first coin the phrase "survival of the fittest," which was not used by Darwin to describe natural selection until the fifth edition of *The Origin of the Species* (Dugger 233). In

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85 See, for instance, Ernest Untermann's *Science and Revolution* (Chicago: Charles Kerr, 1905). In his introduction, Untermann illustrates the SP's monistic perspective, insisting that natural science is not only complementary to economic theory but even the necessary foundation for economics (and hence, socialist theory). He writes, "Human history is not only economic history, but also natural history. The economic history itself would not be possible without the foundation which is the special domain of natural history. The study of human evolution, therefore, requires an analysis of the biological development of mankind as well as of its economic development. From this point of view, man's development in society and his general position in the universe appear as parts of the entire world-process. My method of investigation is that of historical materialism. Just as in the study of economics and politics we trace certain ideas, and their application in practice, back to economic facts, so in biology we trace certain ideas back to the material facts of the earth and of the rest of the universe. In this way, we obtain a universal key to the entire intellectual activity of mankind, and a sound basis for the solution of all the riddles of the universe" (5-6).

86 Darwin did not favor the term "evolution" himself precisely because it implied progress.

Social Statics (1851), he proposed the logic that "advancement has been hitherto the rule" and thus "it must continue until the state we call perfection is reached" (64). "All imperfection," then, was defined as, "unfitness to the conditions of existence" (64). Socialists adopted this language of fitness, picturing socialists as among those uniquely fit for the present "conditions of existence" and the coming cooperative commonwealth as being a state of universal fitness.

One of the most damaging implications of the SP's evolutionism was that their democratic and radical principles were hampered by a discourse that insisted upon "natural" or biological justifications for structural inequalities. Historian Mark Pittenger has noted how the SP's participation in dominant evolutionary discourse on the one hand allowed them to make subversive interventions in that discourse but on the other hand fundamentally limited their radicalism by making it subject to a science prone to reinforcing inveterate "racism, sexism, and nativism" (9). I would also add "classism." Indeed, such perspectives justified exclusion of and prejudice against the "others" of evolution—especially immigrants, minorities, and women—who were seen as outside or lagging behind "the evolutionary tendencies of today" when socialists were supposedly at the forefront.[87] Scientific explanations or legitimations of socialism also indirectly reinforced existing social hierarchies by reaffirming the authority of the mostly bourgeois white men who had the resources, education, expertise, and recognition to be scientists.

Implicitly, their scientific approach placed evolution/natural history as more fundamental than economics, and likewise race and sex as more fundamental than class. Class was understood to be "artificial," so a classless society would be a return to "nature," wherein only "natural" differences or inequalities would remain, illustrating an assumed divergence

87 Ernest Untermann, quoted in Pittenger, 177.

between economic and social inequities. This divergence meant, as we shall see evidence of in the socialist utopias discussed in this chapter, that many socialists projected racially-segregated cooperative commonwealths, illustrating the difficulty of imagining racial diversity in a socialist utopia.[88]

In line with these racist tendencies, since many socialists saw consciously helping evolution towards its destination as their main tactic, it meant that Francis Galton's "eugenics," or, the scientific improvement of the genetic composition of the human race through such methods as selective breeding, was endorsed as a means for socioeconomic transformation. Eugenics put the reproductive couple at the center of how social change was imagined at a time in which the future of marriage and the family were magnified social concerns due to sweeping changes in material and social conditions that fragilized the social order.[89] Hence, both socialists and nonsocialists placed "extreme emphasis on the social import and significance of the marital relation as the key to race improvement and race perpetuation" (Calhoun 325). Socialist novels, in focusing on revolutionary romances underwritten by evolutionary tropes, are an extremely apt venue for examining popular and radical anxieties and desires about race and sexuality during the Progressive era. The focus on the reproductive couple as the figure of and means to the cooperative commonwealth is seen in the proliferation of the socialist

88 Unfortunately, what socialists then found difficult to imagine then seems to still be difficult to imagine today as seen in socialized countries wherein nativism remains a real problem. For instance, Angela Merkel created a big stir when she "admitted" that "multiculturalism has utterly failed" in Germany. Similarly, historians have pointed out how the most successful socialist enclaves in the U.S. (such as Milwaukee) depended upon comparatively uniform ethnic populations (in Milwaukee's case, Germans).

89 Some of the major socioeconomic shifts included rapid industrialization, urbanization, corporate combination, immigration, etc. Women entering the workplace in greater numbers and gaining greater political visibility along with the increasing divorce rates and decreasing birth rates (especially among upper and middle class women), also generated a lot of cultural anxiety about family, marriage, and reproduction (and their relationship to society and the nation).

courtship stories discussed in the first chapter. In the symbolic love triangles prevalent in socialist marriage plots, the protagonists usually reject potential militant working-class mates in favor of unions with peaceable bourgeois partners, signaling a commitment to constructivist and often authoritarian socialist strategies. These ideological romantic preferences also have distinct racial dimensions, as the chosen bourgeois mate is a white, native specimen of the highest order while the rejected proletariat is often a less-fit immigrant other. Thus, the romantic resolutions of socialist marriage plots legitimize right-wing strategies by literally aligning them with fitness and the evolutionary advancement of the race. While evolutionary tropes are implicit in most SP novels, an overt discursive engagement with an implicitly racist and teleological version of evolutionary science is most visible in the works of George Cram Cook, George Allan England, Walter Hurt, Jack London, Charles Allan Steere, and Walter Marion Raymond. Their writings tend to literalize the "evolutionary" process of social change imagined by right-wing members of the SP, extending the elitist and vanguardist tendencies of many socialist marriage plots by portraying the class-based privilege of their socialist heroes as the result of inherent racial fitness. The strongest and most direct critiques or reevaluations of such eugenic understandings of evolution are to be found in the novels of Arthur Bullard, Ernest Poole, and Elias Tobekin. There are also authors who fall somewhere in between, such as I.K. Friedman, whose second novel seems to be written in part as a response to the problematic discourses of fitness perpetuated in his first.

In this chapter, I will address the works of these novelists that explicitly engage in debates about SP evolutionism by centrally featuring evolutionary and eugenic tropes. Evolution, a term etymologically linked to the unrolling of a book,[90] is a fundamentally narrative science in its tracking of change over time and so has some formal parallels with the

90 According to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, its original meaning, "an opening of what was rolled up," comes from the Latin word evolutionem, or the "unrolling (of a book)."

genre of the novel even if the latter is more often concerned with the life of a character than the multigenerational development of an entire species. Early-twentieth-century SP novelists responded both to Darwinian evolutionary theory and to the corresponding "tradition of Darwinian courtship novels that had developed among the realists such as Howells and James" (Bender *Evolution* 3). Their works involved courtships whose outcomes literally and symbolically affect the future of the race and/or individuals who represent highly-evolved members of the species that continue to evolve throughout their lifetimes, placing the "fit specimen" or the reproductive couple at the center of their aesthetic. In imagining socialism as realized by or the realization of perfect bodies with normativized race, gender, and sexuality, socialists provided ideological incentives that tapped into existing cultural desires and anxieties for the furtherance their future political ends.[91] Ultimately, then, many of the (r)evolutionary romances considered in this chapter contributed to social conservatism in the SP and to the construction of whiteness through discursively associating socialism with highly-evolved masculine civilization. On the other hand, some novelists deployed evolutionary tropes in order to self-consciously revise or undermine them, questioning the sharp distinction between economic and social forms of equality assumed in eugenic understandings of the means or ends of socialism.

A. EVOLUTIONARY THEORY, SEXUALITY, AND RACE IN SP NOVELS

At the turn of the century, "sexuality" emerged from its Victorian repression to re-enter public discourse, specifically through the preponderance of evolutionary theory. Consequently, sexuality was understood mainly in terms of natural selection. The popularization of Darwinism likewise shifted the dominant discourse of gender concerns away from "The

91 I take the concept of "ideological incentives" from Fredric Jameson's *The Political Unconscious*.

Woman Question" to the "Sex Problem," and identified the latter as one of the weightiest social issues.[92] Because the Sex Problem was explicitly linked with the development and propagation of species, it also explicitly linked sexuality with race. Pioneering sexologist Havelock Ellis wrote in the 1897 "General Preface" to his *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, "I regard sex as the central problem of life. And now that the problem of religion has practically been settled, and that the problem of labor has at least been placed on a practical foundation, the question of sex—*with the racial questions that rest on it*—stands before the coming generations as the chief problem for solution" (vi).[93] Ellis, who—like many prominent sexual reformers—was also anti-capitalist, was an important reference for American socialists as they saw class as contributing to the sex problem in two major ways. First, in throwing off Victorian conventions, sexual propriety or prudery was seen as a bourgeois "class instinct" that suppressed people's natural desires. Secondly, the process of sexual selection was directly hindered by the artificial social distinctions created by class, thereby weakening the race.[94]

In Walter Hurt's novel *The Scarlet Shadow* (1906), prostitute Marguerite Howard—an unfortunate victim of the Sex Problem—becomes the mouthpiece of socialist evolutionism in a

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92 According to the Darwinian conception, the components of the Sex Problem included, "the male's combativeness, sexual passion, jealously, and possessiveness; the female's power to select the superior male; the power of biological beauty in courtship; and questions of sexual and racial difference" (Bender *Evolution* 7). Socialist speaker Lena Morrow Lewis wrote an article for *The Masses* about how there is a "tendency…to confound the woman question with the sex question" but they are by no means the same. She suggests that the sex question is more applicable to men since, following anthropologist Lester Ward, she views "the male [as] simply an evolution in the course of nature for the purpose of differentiation, and in the strict biological sense, MAN is the SEX" whereas "woman is THE RACE." She sees the "institution of private property," which gives man control over the sex relations of woman, as the source of contemporary confusion between the questions. See "The Sex and Woman Questions" in *The Masses* Vol. 1, no. 12 (December 1911): 7.

93 Havelock Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex, Vol. 1, Third Ed.* (Philadelphia: F.A. Davis, 1910).

94 See for instance, Marion Moulton in George Cram Cook's *The Chasm* (1911) or Katie in Susan Glaspell's *The Visioning* (1911) who both have to overcome their bourgeois conventionality and expectations for a good marriage in order to be with their working-class lovers.

spontaneous address to white slavery reformers. Invoking practically every evolutionary and eugenic buzz word, she explains that,

> Socialism, insuring economic independence to every member of society of either sex, will make possible *marriage by natural selection—the only form of union that is not a crime.* Human mating then will be as infallibly harmonious and as enduringly constant as those of birds, in which we find the perfection of conjugal relations.[95] They will we have only love-marriages and love-children, according to divine law. *Then, and then only, can we breed a normal race: then and only then can we have social purity and a superior civilization.* (my emphasis 273)[96]

This speech very acutely illustrates the assumptions and implications of socialists' belief in sexual selection as a means to social change. It assumes that love and sexual desire are synonymous, as well as heterosexual, monogamous, and revolutionary. It poses natural selection as a rational process based on inherent fitness. "Natural selection," then, provided a biologically-sanctioned means for socialists to reconcile their competing enthusiasms for social freedom and social planning, as well as their seemingly contradictory projections of socialism as both the height of civilization and a return to nature. Since capitalism had eventually created a system of mating wherein money was a "law of injunction" that led to unnatural couplings and racial decline, it was assumed that a classless society would allow for

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95 The illustration of natural monogamy through the "mating bird" formulation is extremely common amongst socialists of the era. It shows up in numerous pamphlets, novels, and even in the witness testimonies of Upton Sinclair's divorce trial.

96 With its simultaneous moral/religious and scientific/economic registers, this speech illustrates a cultural transition at large and in the SP between the rhetoric of social purity (associated with Victorian reform and early Christian socialism) and social hygiene (associated with Progressive reform and scientific socialism). The latter, based on a modern scientific perspective akin to socialist evolutionism, specifically reinforces white, middle-class, male authority.

unrestricted sexual selection that in turn would have healthful and eugenic effects. Socialism in this sense *was* a form of eugenics.

There were, however, limits as to how far socialists would take eugenics as the means or ends of socialism. Jack London's epistolary novel written in collaboration with Anna Strunsky, *The Kempton-Wace Letters* (1903), provides a good negative example in this case. In the novel, London avidly took on the role of a socialist eugenicist in voicing the character of young economics professor Herbert Wace while Strunsky played the part of Herbert's father figure, the elderly poet Dane Kempton. The occasion for the novel is Herbert's engagement to the lovely young poet-scientist Hester,[97] which launches a debate about Love between the two "men."[98] Dane thinks Love the most important, vital, natural, universal, timeless, necessary thing on earth. Herbert thinks Love is pointless, destructive, irrational, anachronistic, historical, individualistic, animalistic, amoral, dangerous and damaging to the future of the race. He favors choosing a "mate" not based on selfish lust but rather for rational, social reasons, which is exactly what he has done in selecting Hester for his future wife.[99] Even though Herbert's perspective is posed as modern and scientific in contrast to Dane's more traditional and romantic viewpoint, in the end, both Hester (who winds up breaking off her engagement when she realizes that Herbert does not love her) and the reading public sided wholeheartedly

97 As this set up suggests, science and literature have certain gendered, political, and generational meanings attached to them. The aging poet is clearly identified as the foil for the modern scientist, and their dialogue serves to identify each other's limitations. However, Hester, who combines the two modalities, is the youngest, freshest, and most successful voice.

98 The opening of *The New York Times* review of the novel reflects the real (and already hackneyed) terms of the debate: "The sex problem again" (quoted in Stasz 85).

99 Herbert informs Dane that in marry Hester, "I contract a tie which my reason tells me is based upon health and sanity and compatibility" (178).

with Dane.[100] The poet George Sterling went so far as to characterize Jack's portion of the novel as "a spiritual misprint, a typographical error half a volume long" while Jack's friend Joseph Noel offered the critical appraisal that Wace's vocabulary, "sounds as if taken that day from an encyclopedia by a conscientious sophomore" (quoted in Boylan 31).

London's sophomoric letters were rejected precisely because he suggests that love and sexual desire are dangerously irrational and therefore should be the subjects of rational, human interventions. Herbert dares to ask, "Since [man] takes sexual selection into his own hands and scientifically breeds the fish and the fowl, the beast and the vegetable, why may he not scientifically breed his own kind?" (66). Moreover, he claims that, "Love, as a means for the perpetuation and development of the human type, is very crude and open to improvement" (67). Instead of buying into Dane's Love, which is only "a blind mating of the blind," he opts for "a clear and open-eyed union of male and female" or "sex comradeship" (69). Like a good Darwinian, he does not see sexual selection as a necessarily progressive or rational process. Like a good Freudian, he contrasts nature with civilization—but unlike Freud, he strongly favors the latter. As the critical backlash against Wace shows, the dominant socialist position seems to insist upon the collapse of nature and civilization in their imaginative projections of the cooperative commonwealth, posing sexual selection—when unimpeded by capitalism and bourgeois ethics—as natural, rational, and love-based.[101] There was a strong propensity, in

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100 The critical tendency is to read *The Kempton-Wace Letters* biographically, posing London's unpopular ideological perspective as a temporary self-delusion necessitated by his tumultuous personal life. London scholars have pointed out the ironic personal circumstances that must have informed the book—that is, his impulsive proposal to Strunsky, which she rationally refused in consultation with her mother (Kershaw 96). Hence, Reeseman sees *The Kempton-Wace Letters* as a "rationalization" of his ensuing "loveless marriage," which he apparently justified by its "furthering the Anglo-Saxon race" at a time in which he was in love with a "Frisco Jewess" (51).

101 This utopian perspective sets the stage for later novelists (who I will be discussing in Chapter Four) that use the irrational nature of love and sexual desire to critique and revise the deterministic strands in scientific socialism.

other words, to fit socialist and evolutionary narratives within existing romantic conventions, revealing how literary and cultural scripts informed socialist evolutionism.[102]

Thus, rather than scientifically breeding socialists, novels showcase a natural "eugenic ideal" who is both a symbolic projection of and means to the cooperative commonwealth. By "eugenic" in this case, I mean "relating to or fitted for the production of good offspring" or "having good inherited characteristics"—by eugenic ideal, I mean one whose progeny are likely to have a positive impact on human evolution and thus bring society closer to socialism. Socialists, by positioning themselves at the forefront of "the evolutionary tendencies of today," cast their politics as "natural outgrowth" of racial progress. In this schema, a person's fitness is determined not only by his or her comparative soundness of mind and body, but also by his or her ideological commitments (which reflect soundness of mind and body).[103] Here, a revolutionary class is tantamount to a highly-evolved race.

When Jack London resigned from the SP, his letter (still signed "yours for the revolution") suggested that it was not because he had given up on socialism, but because he was disappointed in the gradualist majority who lacked "fire and fight" and supplanted the central tenant of class struggle with "peaceableness and compromise." Interestingly, in rejecting what

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102 London in fact went on to largely comply with this romantic prescription in his next socialist novel, *The Iron Heel* (1908). The central couple in the story (Avis and Earnest Everhard) are instantly attracted to one another, quickly fall in love, and make for a highly fit couple. The Love that was maddening for Herbert becomes therapeutic for Earnest.

103 In novels written by socialists, an individual's "fitness" is determined by their ideological commitments in addition to their physical and moral make-up. Acknowledging this sheds new light on socialist romances that seem to trivialize women's political commitments as based merely on personal romantic preferences (do I love the Cause because I love the man or do I love the man because I love the Cause?) insofar as according to a socialist evolutionist perspective, they are the same thing. George Cram Cook's Marion Moulton, the heroine of his novel *The Chasm* (1911) provides a good example of a character whose romantic preferences are explicitly dependent upon her scientific and political convictions.

he saw as the SP's self-appointed role as a civilizing vanguard, he repeatedly refers to their constituency with both "classes" *and* "races":

> My final word is that liberty, freedom and independence are royal things that cannot be presented to, nor thrust upon, *races and classes.* If *races and classes* cannot rise up and by their strength of brain and brawn, wrest from the world liberty, freedom and independence, they never in time can come to these royal possessions…and if such royal things are kindly presented to them by *superior individuals*, on silver platters, they will know not what to do with them, will fail to make use of them, and will be what they have always been in the past…..*inferior races and inferior classes.* (my emphasis)[104]

London, a left-winger well known for his racist tendencies, was a campaigner for eugenics who spent the last years of his life retreating from urban political activism and trying to scientifically breed better farm animals at Beauty Ranch (Kershaw 214-215). Subsequent critics and biographers have debated over the extent to which he revised his masculinist and white supremacist tendencies over the course of his life.[105] However, what interests me in his letter of resignation is the way in which it reveals the deep ongoing confusion and overlap between race and class in the American socialist imaginary. Here, socialists become not an expression of the masses but rather a group of "superior individuals," a confusion traceable to the SP's conflation of economic and evolutionary thought.

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104 Quoted in Reeseman's *Rereading Jack London* (171).

105 See, for instance, Reeseman's critical biography of London wherein she suggests that he outgrew his beliefs in Anglo-Saxon and male superiority with the help of Walling and Huxley (e.g. 52-54). I myself have argued that London's inclusion of a scholarly gloss written by a historian of the future in his socialist "found manuscript" novel *The Iron Heel* evidences a self consciousness about how his own individualist, misogynist, and racist attitudes are products of his age.

Besides making race and sexuality as integral (if not more integral) than class, socialist evolutionism led the SP to define its ends as "the progress of the race," which implicitly framed their goals in nationalistic terms. In America, socialism was indeed posed as the natural outgrowth of the foundational republican political discourses and values of the U.S. These values were racialized, associated specifically with the country's dominant Anglo-Saxon heritage. Instead of seeing the foundations of American liberty and equality as fundamentally racist, classist, and sexist, they saw its parameters as naturally determined by those who had a biological capacity for self-government.[106] Democracy in such discourse always assumed a certain degree of racial achievement/evolutionary advancement, and the U.S.—or rather a privileged segment of its population—was at the forefront of progressive evolution globally. Hence, American socialism was also associated with Anglo-Saxon inheritance and whiteness, often conceived of not primarily as a class-based achievement but rather as a racial accomplishment and/or a sexual one, in line with the gendered "Founding Fathers" rhetoric.

Socialists, then, participated in the race and gender projects that Gail Bederman outlines in her historical study of the Progressive era, *Manliness and Civilization*, that is, the process of shoring up male power through an assertion of racial dominance, a link typically forged through the discourse of "civilization" (5). Socialists posed socialism as the final realization of civilization, and in doing so reinforced its association with white men instead of subverting the gender and race norms therein. Indeed, as late as 1910, Wisconsin congressman Victor Berger was arguing at the National Convention for exclusionary labor practices since he believed it was "a question of civilization. I believe that our civilization, The European or Caucasian or whatever name you choose to call it, I believe our civilization is in question" (quoted in Miller

106 Scholars such as Matthew Frye Jacobson have demonstrated the ways in which racial discourses articulate "national subjectivity and national belonging," and are deployed to determine, in Theodore Roosevelt's terms, one's "fitness for self-government" (21).

35). Socialists had an opportunity to overcome racist and sexist discourses that reinforced women and minorities as the others of evolution and citizenship; however, instead they became major constituents in the construction of whiteness, promising that under socialism, "we will produce a better race of children and a higher type of civilization."[107]

Historically, "race" played a much more central role in Party policy and debates than did gender.[108] At its outset, the Party established a fairly progressive, anti-racist stance in line with international Marxism that, unfortunately, it not only failed to act upon in practice but even somewhat back-tracked upon over time.[109] Indeed, the first resolution adopted at the 1901 Unity Convention in Indianapolis that founded the SP was an anti-imperialist decree in solidarity with workers of the recently-annexed Puerto Rico. The resolution acknowledged how the former Spanish colony was now suffering under "the capitalist rule and exploitation" wreaked by U.S. occupation of the island, which was a launch point for U.S. imperialism.

A more controversial resolution that was tabled twice before eventually being passed was "The Negro Resolution," which identified "color prejudice and race hatred" as tools of capitalists to keep the working class in check, declared the "social and political inequality" of the negro to be "the effects of the long exploitation of his labor-power," pronounced "negro interests and struggles" to be the same as "the interests and struggles of the workers of all lands, without regard to race, to color, or to sectional lines," and finally "invite[d] the negro to membership and fellowship with us in the world movement for economic emancipation by

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107 A.W. Ricker in "Free Love and Socialism" (St. Louis: The National Rip-Saw Publishing Co, 1911.)

108 The only explicit mention of gender issues appears in the "Demands" section of the original Party Platform, in which #6 is "Equal civil and political rights for men and women." However, there were no resolutions or debates on record associated with "the woman question."

109 For a dated but trenchant analysis of the SP's shortcomings on racial issues, see R. Laurence Moore's article, "Flawed Fraternity" in *The Historian*, Vol. 32, no.1 (Nov. 1969): 1-18.

which equal liberty and opportunity shall be secured for every man."[110] The provisional nature of this resolution is attested to by the extremely low percentage of African American members, the SP's limited efforts to organize amongst African Americans, and their tacit endorsement of segregated locals.[111]

Furthermore, it is seen in the unapologetically racist attitudes and propaganda of many prominent socialists, views that were often underwritten by evolutionary facts and tolerated by the Party, which historian Aileen Kraditor has seen as evidence that "the Negro question," in spite of the early resolution, was a "nondefining issue" for the movement (156).[112] Eugene V. Debs may be famously remembered for taking to the pages of *ISR* to publically censure as a counterfeit, uninformed socialist an anonymous writer who urged him to read Thomas Dixon's *Clansmen Trilogy* for a better grasp of the race question, but there were plenty of prominent Party members whose thought was more sympathetic with the anonymous letter to the editor. For instance, Kate Richards O'Hare wrote a pamphlet aimed at "white voters of the South," titled " 'Nigger' Equality" (1912),[113] in which she attempted to allay their fears about socialism by insisting that, while African Americans would necessarily have economic equality in a socialist state, this by no means assumes their "social, physical, or mental equality." She herself believed that "[t]here can be but one solution to the race problem": "Segregation." Insisting

110 The resolution is printed in its entirety at the end of Charles Vail's pamphlet, "Socialism and The Negro Problem" (New York: Comrade Publishing Co, 1902). Even this fairly progressive resolution assumes a white male voice that speaks for the Party. The Negro Resolution was introduced by one of the three black delegates at the convention, causing more than one historian to speculate that the Party would have remained mum on the issue had it not been for his efforts.

111 Socialist Party New York Local Minutes. Also Miller (the NEC allowed segregated locals in the Deep South; there was not a National initiative to organize among Negros until 1920).

112 By "nondefining," Kraditor means those issues "on which [radical] movements did not distinguish themselves [from the environing society] any more than they had to" (156).

113 St. Louis: National Rip-saw Press, 1912.

that it is capitalism that "forces [whites and blacks] into a social, economic, and physical relation which is just as revolting to the negro as it is to [her]," she projects a distinct racial organization for the cooperative commonwealth. Under socialism, blacks could have "one section of the country where every condition is best fitted for them" and everyone could then "work out our own problems freed from the curse of race antagonism." O'Hare, then, strategically links capitalism to miscegenation and "unnatural" racial mixing.

Nationally, Jim Crow Laws and the record number of lynchings that took place in the U.S. (which were certainly not geographically isolated to the South) were testaments to ongoing racism and racial conflict. There were two general approaches to this "Negro Problem" in the early SP: the first, whose main proponents were anti-racist internationalist socialists, was to say that racial oppression was identical with or simply one form of class oppression. The second was to identify it as a separate problem, moreover one that was less important than and even detrimental to the establishment of socialism.[114] Both positions ultimately discouraged African American participation in the SP, the former by collapsing race and class in such a way that neglected the unique ongoing historical oppression of blacks and the latter by keeping the question of race wholly separate even as they implicitly racialized the working class (as white).[115]

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114 There were eventual exceptions to these two positions, such as William English Walling, who helped found the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909. Walling treated racism as parallel but not identical to class struggle, and (as his investment in reform organizations such as the NAACP suggests), he did not think the U.S. should wait for the dawn of the cooperative commonwealth to fight racism. Though many members of the NAACP were socialists and few members became socialists (such as W.E.B. DuBois), they did not use the organization as a platform for SP recruitment.

115 Anti-racist socialists like Eugene Debs repeatedly insisted that racial inequality was a bourgeois problem when in fact, "there is no negro question outside the labor question" (*ISR*, Vol. 4, no. 5 (Nov. 1903): 259). He actually argued for the striking of the "Negro Resolution" from the Party Platform on account of its tendency to accentuate rather than help overcome social inequalities. On the other hand, even African American authors tended to see the "Negro Problem" as distinct from "white" Marxist

The latter position aligned with mainstream discourses that tended to separate and isolate the "Negro Problem" from the "Labor Problem." Moreover, the Negro Problem was considered to apply mainly to the agricultural South in the aftermath of the Civil War and the Labor Problem more to the urban, industrial North. Hence, most novels written by members of the SP were set in Northern cities (most often New York or Chicago) and featured almost no African American characters—a silence which, as critics such as Toni Morrison in *Playing in the Dark* have argued, speaks volumes. The few novels that do feature minorities, including *Darkness and Dawn*, *When Things Were Doing*, and *Rebels of the New South*, are future-oriented and make explicit what other texts' avoidance of racial others subtly imply: that socialism (like democracy before it) is understood as a race-based, sex-based capacity.

Though science fiction set 1500 years in the future when all existing nations, cultures, and races have been swept away, George Allan England's popular trilogy, *Darkness and Dawn* (1914),[116] clearly depicts socialism as a racial achievement. The heroes of the series are a courageous engineer and his buxom secretary who mysteriously wake up over a millennium after a worldwide disaster to find they are the sole survivors of the long-eradicated human race. The results of the catastrophe and the ensuing plot are carefully calculated to verify prevailing evolutionary theory—indeed, a review in *ISR* praised it "as a story of anthropology" and advised its readers to "buy copies for the young folks and get them interested in Darwin,

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class struggle. Sutton Griggs, for instance, claims in *Imperium in Imperio* (1899) that "[t]he Anglo-Saxon race is divided into two hostile camps—labor and capital. These two forces are gradually drawing together for a tremendous conflict, a momentous battle…Let us thank God that we are not in the struggle" (157).

116 *Darkness and Dawn* is actually used as the primary example of "the insatiable appetite of the [American] public for an art of sensational shocks and sentimental twaddle" in an uppity *Atlantic Monthly* article (748). The publisher's advertisement for the series, which refers to it as "The Book of Thrills" and highlights the many "*entertainment* possibilities of this big romance," is included in a footnote to the article (original emphasis 748). See Edward Garnett's "Some Remarks on American and English Fiction" in *Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 114, no. 6 (Dec. 1914): 747 – 756.

Huxley, and Wallace."[117] England's modern Adam and Eve eventually find their closest humanoid descendants in the albino (white), cave-dwelling Merucaans (Americans) who they lead through an accelerated process of social evolution (a la Henry Lewis Morgan's *Ancient Society*)—from savagery to socialist utopia—in a matter of years, but not before they wipe out the barbarous "half-animal" "blue-black" Horde (of degenerate racial others) who are the main threat to establishing a higher civilization.

Charles Allen Steere's *When Things Were Doing* (1907) is an earlier "utopian" novel that is nearly as enthusiastic about genocide as a means of bringing about the socialist future. The story depicts a successful worldwide socialist revolution led by a comparatively small cadre of educated, white men by a process that the novel's hero describes in gendered and scientific terms as "our attempt to seize evolution by the horns and force her gait" (54).[118]

The secret strategy board, composed of all white professional men, is led by the novel's protagonist Bill Tempest (whose last name signals his alignment with a cataclysmic understanding of evolution).[119] Bill (or, President Tempest) is a superlative physical and intellectual specimen who the strategy board apparently identified from the start as their "natural and logical leader" (27). Bill is a comprehensive masculine ideal, a "Hercules" in academics and athletics, fighting and drinking who should be the hero of "a second and modern Aenied" (17-18). He is "without an ounce of superfluous adipose tissue," "erect as a crowbar,"

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117 *ISR*, Vol. 14, no. 11 (May 1914): 635. "Huxley and Wallace" refer to English anatomist Thomas Henry Huxley (1825 - 1895), who helped popularize Darwin, and English biologist Alfred Russel Wallace (1823 - 1913), who helped influence Darwin's theory of natural selection and had socialist tendencies that were influenced by Edward Bellamy.

118 This is more aggressive wording of Eugene Debs's rationale for the SP being to "assist the process of evolution" (quoted in Weinstein 12).

119 President Bill's first name bears a connection to violent conquest through William the Conqueror and the Norman Conquest, which originally popularized the name; the shortened version "Bill" also is etymologically connected to the Germanic word for "sword."

and "massive yet agile as an eel"—all in all, "physically as fine a specimen of his genus as the Granite or any other state ever turned loose to compete in the cutthroat game of life" (18-19). A Harvard and Columbia Law graduate, Bill is immediately elected as a Republican to the New York State Assembly where he quickly becomes disillusioned with the status quo. His ensuing conversion to socialism—far from being a climactic resolution—is treated rather cursorily in the novel's brief exposition, presented merely as a logical step of his development.[120] He is the fittest of the fit and becoming a socialist is a natural indicator of his being highly-evolved.

To emphasize that the revolutionists led by Bill are racially-superior rather than class conscious, the narrator distinguishes them from the presumed proletariat. Instead, the strategy board is a self-identified vanguard that has given up educating the general public on the desirability of socialism since "you cannot by force compel heterogeneous masses to homogeneous thought and action, even for their own conspicuous and signal advantage" (30).[121] Indeed, on the eve of their revolution, it is mentioned that the "said proletariat himself, was never farther away from, if never nearer to, accepting the principles of Socialism" (51). Only real socialism can make "him" do that.

Similarly, the strategy boards of other countries are made up of learned white men, such as the "chief" of the Russian revolutionaries, Revenski, who the narrator takes pains to note received a "British education" (159). Socialism's status as the intellectual province of white men is reinforced in a joke that Revenski delivers halfway through a lengthy victory speech addressed to the American strategy board: "But you will forgive my discursive dialectics. I am

120 "And when his term was up…he began to study law—and sociological and economic questions as well—from a totally different standpoint than that of most college text books. He became an ardent Socialist" (24).

121 Of course, this "heterogeneity" conveniently disappears after the revolution. The only opposition that the strategy board faces after they take over the U.S. is from a few rogue capitalists.

arguing Socialism with you who have sounded all its 'depths and shoals' as if I were addressing a primary class of Hottentots" (164).

Not only are revolutions led by the fit, but their means to revolution illuminate the comparative fitness of particular nations or races. Russia and Europe's revolutionary efforts "smack of crudeness and a barbarity more in keeping with some remote age when the world was younger and men were demi-brutes" as compared to the U.S.'s "orderly and bloodless revolution" (161-162).[122] Americans' masterful seizing of the evolutionary reins without getting bucked prove that they are the most advanced race.

While the revolutionary scenario imagined for America is entirely peaceful, American socialist engineers develop an enormously powerful atom-bomb-like explosive called "sizmos" as well as ultra-fast submarines that both enable the extremely violent Russian and European revolutions and allow the U.S. to protect their fledgling cooperative commonwealth. The U.S.'s socialist government uses the military technology developed by socialist scientists to wipe out the united navies of all remaining European (capitalist) empires—a bloodbath through which, the narrator disturbingly claims, "Socialism had proved its right to be" (142). The death of millions is accordingly eulogized with an unattributed stanza from Ragnar Redbeard's[123] *Might is Right*: "For might is right/ when empires sink/ in storms of steel and flame,/ and it is

122 The Russians start an extremely violent Guy-Fawkes style revolution that involves them blowing up the royal palace along with every other major military, governmental, commercial, and religious building in the country. While the report describes anarchy, terrorism, looting, genocide, and the collapse of public infrastructure, the Americans still endorse the revolutionary violence and see it as the logical/natural response to the Russian socioeconomic context: "when tyrants sow the wind, they should not be inordinately disappointed if they reap the whirlwind" (67). By contrast, the Americans (in line with their different sociopolitical context) have a bloodless revolution in which there is a peaceful takeover of the government, military, and trusts (68-94).

123 Ragnar Redbeard is the pseudonym of Arthur Desmond, an Australian journalist who identified as a socialist and anarchist at various times. *Might is Right* (written in the 1890s and still unfortunately in print today) is an individualist anarchist-Nietzschean-social Darwinian tract and racist diatribe whose central thesis is aptly summed up in the title.

right/ when weakling breeds/ are hunted down like game." In other words, the narrator has gone to great lengths to argue that socialism is justified *not* by ethics but rather by nature, or, "the principle of Evolution" which is "inexorably impersonal" (143). If "weakling breeds," in this context are unexpectedly associated with the Western European capitalist empires who have been historically empowered by Redbeard's eugenic logic, the novel still suggests that there are other "weakling breeds" to be contended with at home—albeit in a much less overtly violent manner.

Though the novel goes on to describe a revolutionized nation in which the "democracy is actual and complete and no distinctions smacking of caste or privilege are permitted," there are implicitly-eugenic practices instituted everywhere. For instance, since "the sine qua non of citizenship was the badge of the worker" in the cooperative commonwealth, this means that "idlers, drones, parasites, and dilettanti might commit suicide or starve; but no adequate provision was made for them to live" (116). Likewise, maintaining social equality means that some formerly lower-class citizens have to be brought up to speed by mandatory education in etiquette schools to minimize the "unutterable horror" possible in communal eating arrangements of "sitting at table beside an uncompromising barbarian whose early training had encouraged the reprehensible habit of satisfying hunger with a knife instead of the conventional fork, together with other gaucheries of unmistakably plebian origin" (187). However, the narrator allays concerns by insisting that, "such instances are comparatively rare owing, on the one hand, to natural selection and, on the other, to the fact that there is in the settlement a school of deportment, most punctiliously patronized by numerous delinquents, where are taught those outward forms that are not improperly regarded as evidence that we have outgrown the cocoanut-throwing stage of our evolutionary durance" (187). Here, class-based tastes are naturalized as evolutionary advancements inherent to civilized races.

Beyond this classism, racism is also institutionalized in the new "casteless" society. As Daniel Bender notes, since the novel "cast socialism as a product of evolution, and, therefore, as a racial accomplishment," its "realization was uneven across the globe" and even domestically (Bender *Abyss* 171).[124] In the last pages of the book, the narrator provides a regional overview of the newly-constituted commonwealth that has been renamed Altruria (in a nod to William Dean Howells's utopian fiction[125]). Besides giving a summary of how towns and each producing region are rationally organized, the narrator describes how the new "Texas," which is "Altruria's cotton belt," "represents the up-to-date attempt at a practical solution to the 'negro' question. Negroes not only perform all the labor of planting, tending, and harvesting this staple, but they also do all the manufacturing" (255). Blacks are responsible for the whole industry (historically associated with slavery), save for "the supervision of a few hundred experts of the Caucausian race" (256). Echoing O'Hare's call for socialist segregation, Steere describes them living in "their own new cities which are as modern and beautiful as any in Altruria" in a manner "just as well in every respect [as whites]" wherein they "are at last happy, industrious, ambitious, free from exploitation, self-respecting and respected of all" (256). There is, in fact, "only one restriction—an unwritten law that they perfectly understand and do not seek to override—that they virtually stay in their own department, unless for good and sufficient reason to the contrary, and there work out their racial destiny, whatever that may be and wherever it may finally lead" (256). The narrator is optimistic about their evolutionary potential but refuses to prophesize.

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124 It might also be added that socialism is a masculine achievement since the novel is nearly devoid of female characters—there are none beyond the slight frame story even though, according to the overview of Altruria, women enjoy complete sexual equality (210-212).

125 See *A Traveler from Altruria* (1894), *Letters of an Altrurian Traveler* (1904), and *Through the Eye of the Needle* (1907).

If all this seems hyperbolic and disturbing, John Spargo warns in his not terribly complimentary review in *ISR* (which was published by the same company as the novel), that Steere's "prophecies…are not to be taken too seriously."[126] He claims that the novel is only "Comrade C.A. Steere…gratifying a lurid and sometimes sardonic fancy."

The publishers themselves, Charles Kerr & Company, strangely pointed out some of the novel's defects in their advertisements and advised that it was not recommended reading if you are "an orthodox Marxian Socialist, believing in class-conscious political revolution" since it features a "utopia" that "presupposed all sorts of violent, sudden, reconstructions of society through an autocratic, semi-secret organization" and "depends upon a deus ex machina, or rather upon several of them."[127] Instead, the ads suggest the book would be best for "new inquirers rather than socialists," indicating their take on novels as a kind of gateway drug and their take on Steere's version of socialism as one that might have powerful popular appeal.[128]

Spargo's review raises the question if Steere intended *When Things Were Doing* to be a satire, the fantasy of a bourgeois intellectual radical. The context of the revolution and commonwealth as a dream induced by Bill's consuming a seemingly fatal volume of alcohol (including highballs, gin rickeys, milk punches, cider, oyster cocktails, Madeira, Rhine wine, Chianti, claret, burgundy, sherry, port, sauterne, hock, champagne, burnt brandy, Roman punch, and egg-nogg) suggests that Spargo's hunch that the story is not to be taken "too seriously" might be accurate (8-9). On the other hand, this context might provide Steere with an excuse to say the things that he wanted to say, allowing him to express his frustration and

126 See John Spargo's "Literature and Art" in *The International Socialist Review*, Vol. VIII (July 1907 – June 1908): 563. All the regular reviewers in *ISR* are powerful figures in the Party and associated with its Right Wing.

127 *ISR*, Vol. VIII (July 1907 – June 1908): 443.

128 *ISR*, Vol. VIII (July 1907 – June 1908): 381.

impatience with Party theory and methods while absolving himself from "sober" reprisals. Either way, the novel forcefully illustrates the problematic sexist, classist, and racist implications of socialist evolutionism taken to its logical conclusion.

Walter Marion Raymond's *Rebels of the New South* (1904) takes on the race problem in a gentler fashion than Steere with a gentler hero to match, censuring all violence as unmanly and animalistic (atavistic in whites; symptomatic in blacks). Both of them take a eugenic ideal for their hero, but *Rebels's* markedly more gradualist conception of social change is manifested in the text's greater investment in sexual selection and reproductive couples. The novel is a complicated family political drama full of symbolic doublings reinforced by the overlapping names of all the characters that evoke the intertwining themes of heredity, racial progress, and nationalism.[129] The narrative self-consciously ties together "modern" and "progressive" perspectives on sex, race, and politics, implicitly making a normative sexuality the precondition for producing socialist futures. Normative sexuality, in this case, is constructed as monogamous, mono-racial, and based on natural selection.

The epigraph foregrounds the themes of socialism and racial progress, which it suggests will occur through environmental and hereditary improvements. Presented as an unidentified Walt Whitman[130] quotation, the epigraph is a creative excerpting from *Leaves of Grass* that weaves together the first two lines of "Oh Magnet-South!" with the first two stanzas of "A

129 There is Dorothy Christian and Custis Christian, Pierre Custis and Custis Christian, Louise Pelham and Pelham Huntington, Virginia Yancey and Virginia Nelson, etc. As the novel is set is Virginia where Custis is one of the oldest family surnames dating back to colonial times, these names ask readers to consider the characters as representative of the social body. The origin of "Custis" is thought to be a shortening of "Augustus," linking the heroes with the Classical Republican tradition while simultaneously aligning them with majesty and empire.

130 Whitman was a favorite of American socialists who identified him as part of their radical literary and intellectual tradition, frequently referencing him in their writing and reprinting his poems in their periodicals and anthologies.

Song" or "For You O Democracy." The first quoted lines are a paean to the "glistening, perfumed" South, full of "quick mettle" and "rich blood" and the last ones are a call to "make the continent indissoluble/…By the love of comrades,/ By the manly love of comrades."[131] The language here vividly combines socialist and eugenic ideals, associating them with "manly" values and the making of "the most splendid race the sun has ever yet shone upon." This epigraph likewise evokes the combination of nature ("blood") and nurture ("love") necessary to bring about this "splendid race." Following suit with its epigraph, *Rebels* is much more interested than those novels by England and Steere in how environmental factors (especially proper parenting and education) lead to fitness. However, the conflicted representation of race in the novel winds up privileging heredity as the basis for fitness and progress.

The two heroes of the story are Custis Christian, the bastard child of a wealthy student and a servant, and his adoptive father, Dr. Pierre Custis. The narrative traces the young Custis's upbringing on an old plantation estate outside of Richmond, Virginia where he develops through love and education into a socialist hero, eventually reconnecting with his estranged parents to reclaim his rightful fortune, convert his whole family to socialism, and marry his wealthy step-sister. It is a decided anomaly amongst American socialist novels of the time period since it includes many African American characters and is set mainly in the South, a region purportedly "unfamiliar with modern capitalism."[132] The novel's setting in an old estate of the rural South, then, helps identify socialism as a "racial" rather than class-based

131 Notably, Raymond omits the short third and final stanza of "A Song": "For you these from me, O Democracy, to serve you ma femme!/ For you, for you I am trilling these songs," which takes a turn away from the homosocial to the more heterosexual construction of Democracy as a woman/wife (Whitman 150).

132 This phrase is taken from Ernest Untermann's review of the novel in *ISR*, Vol 5 (July 1904 – June 1905): 506. In spite of (or perhaps because of) its anomalous subject matter, Raymond's novel has received no critical attention aside from a few sentences in Rideout (28, 73, 75). The analysis of it provided in this chapter is therefore the first extended literary criticism of the novel since the year of its publication.

accomplishment since the characters do not become socialists due to class consciousness or direct environmental stimuli.

Ernest Untermann said as much in his qualified praise of the novel,[133] pointing out how it does not "express the thoughts of the proletariat" since it is "dealing with an environment in which the class struggle has not yet assumed the vitality which makes it so offensive to the capitalist world of the northern states" (506). Indeed, Untermann astutely notes that the leading characters are not working class and the "hero…is not the proletarian thinker who has learned the bitter lesson of the modern wage slave's life, but a carefully raised and trained specimen of humanity as it might be universal under the advanced conditions of the cooperative commonwealth."[134] Thus, even though—unlike England's and Steere's utopian fiction—it is a "realistic" narrative set in the present day, the characters and plot anticipate future utopian socialist society at the microcosmic level of the family. Untermann suggests that its appeal might be limited due to its prospective rather than presentist bent:

> In reading this novel, then, we are not following the development of the victorious rebel against the capitalist environment, but the life history of one who may serve as an ideal for the coming man. This ideal is, indeed, inspiring…But…will hardly appeal to those who are compelled to live the hopeless existence of the typical proletarian, and who are looking for an

133 *ISR*, Vol 5 (July 1904 – June 1905): 506.

134 Interestingly enough, all of the reviewers from *ISR* who are bringing up class in their reviews of those novels that explicitly address race are also member of the National Immigration Commission (discussed in the second part of this chapter) that favored Asian exclusion. The lack of discussion of race in Untermann's review, along with his assertion that the experience of the "modern wage slave" or "typical proletarian" is not reflected in the novel illustrates how he does not consider the black servants in the text to be members of the working class.

> expression of their own feeling and actions rather than those of men who come to them as saviors from an entirely different social atmosphere. (506)

The socialist "ideal for the coming man" mentioned in the review is Custis Christian—a subversive choice in many ways since he is an illegitimate child whose early years were spent in a brothel. Custis and his jilted mother's last name, "Christian," is ironic, showcasing their superior values compared with the hypocritical Christians who shun them for illegitimacy and immorality due to bourgeois conventionality. In spite of being stripped of his religious significance, Jesus serves as not only a socialist[135] but also eugenic model in the text. Consequently, "Christmas" figures prominently in the symbolic economy of the novel. Custis, who is given to the Doctor as a Christmas gift, is born on Christmas as is his younger half-sister (Virginia) and his own son. All of these modern messiahs perpetuate Darwinian rather than Divine myths and are the prophets of socialism rather than Christianity. They are, as Dr. Pierre refers to socialists in general, "the salt of the earth, the saviors of the race" (46).[136] They are not the result of immaculate conception, but rather the progeny of fit couples based on sexual selection. Instead of being the son of God, Custis (like his sister and son) is the product of good *breeding* in both senses: unfettered sexual selection and proper upbringing. Undoing the typical understanding of seduction as being led astray, the narrative presents Custis's parents' affair as natural and his father's refusal to marry his mother due to class conventions as villainous and unnatural (going against evolutionary dictates). His father, Fred Huntington, is an extremely fine physical specimen who was "attracted" to his mother Dorothy "from the

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135 Jesus is frequently seen as a forefather of socialism during this time period, not only for his radical, egalitarian teachings but also for his being persecuted as "an enemy of society" for spreading the truth.

136 Custis and Dr. Pierre go into politics for the sake of the "progress of the race" (73). This is an extremely common formulation among Progressive-era socialists, indicating the extent to which socialism was imagined in racialized, nationalistic terms at the time.

first." The text is sure to emphasize that he "meant well in the beginning" and "loved her," but social custom intervened and made a "base coward" out of him (43-44).

In other words, while the premise of the story, with its emphasis on adoption and the loving education that Custis receives from Dr. Pierre, might at first seem to put nurture over nature, a surprising amount of emphasis is placed upon Custis's innate superiority. Custis, like Bill Tempest, has an exaggerated physical perfection reminiscent of the Anglo-Saxon ideal with waving blonde hair and "paradise blue" eyes. From his muscular, perfectly-proportioned body to his voice "delicious as a bird's," the text exalts in his bodily perfections at every opportunity. And these perfections were formed before the doctor interceded to make him a more perfect man. Indeed, the doctor notes immediately upon his arrival how he is "a superb youngster," exclaiming, "How perfectly he is put together! What arms! What legs! What a chest! He is a poem, this boy is!" (29). Dr. Pierre is interested in exhibiting his perfection and establishing him as a social model. Taking a cue from the "Body Beautiful" section of Bernarr MacFadden's iconoclastic *Physical Culture Magazine*, he has photographs taken of Custis "mos' start naked, so as to show off de grace and cemetery of his figger" (59). At one point, he even makes him take off his shirt for a guest before reciting all his physical measurements—from his neck down to his calves—to the quarter-inch (68).

Not surprisingly, Custis's intellectual and moral qualities match the excellences of his body. His mind has the "acumen to penetrate the most subtle expression" while remaining "home of the *whitest* thoughts" (my emphasis 69). As with Bill, his superior Anglo-Saxon mind and heart mean that he naturally "thought himself into a Socialist."[137] Suggesting that radical

137 Custis's changing understanding of socialism also evokes the evolutionary trope of a progressive, developmental model. He eventually leaves behind his juvenile Bellamyism to mature into a "red-hot" socialist as "scientific and uncompromising as Karl Marx himself" (176). Elsewhere, he refers to the SDP as "a party which stands for adult socialism—the full-flowered Marxian article" (223).

commitments are indeed a hereditary predisposition or race-based capacity, Custis insists that "Socialists, like poets, are born, not made" (176)—a premise which is reinforced by both his estranged brother and lover naturally developing into socialists on their own (179).

If Custis is the hyperbolic "perfect specimen" or eugenic ideal, his status as a walking ideological incentive for socialism is in fact dramatized in the text. While Dr. Pierre and Custis think themselves into socialists, practically every other character who converts to socialism in the text (e.g., Pelham, Virginia, Fred, etc) does so due to their overpowering love or desire for Custis. Every worthwhile character in the book is instantly and obsessively attracted to Custis, and his physical splendor is indisputably the initial source of admiration.[138] Unfortunately, then, the novel makes Custis's perfection the criterion for the kind of unselfish love that leads to socialism. Indeed, his narcissistic, wayward biological father Fred Huntington comes to Custis in the night to declare to him: "I love you so it makes me doubt if I ever really loved anybody before…I am certain you are the only being I have ever loved more than myself" (239). Custis responds that he will consider partially reciprocating his father's love if he is allowed to "prescribe the conditions," the first of which is to "give up this Republican foolishness" and "cease this senseless adoration, this blasphemous worship of gold" (240). So, by the end, Custis is literally bartering his love to make socialist converts. His perfection (and the hegemonic construction of perfection that he reinforces) is the pay-off for radical political commitment. In positioning Custis as the irresistible ideal for the "coming man," the novel

138For instance, Virginia gushes to her mother: "He is so handsome! He is beautiful! He is a poem in athletics! Such a face as he has—Adonis's and Apollo's were plain when you saw his. And such teeth! They make his lips look as though they were sandwiched with lilies of the valley. And eyes of the heavenliest blue—that serene, Aprilish blue you find in periwinkle blossoms. And his cheeks—why pink carnations would turn green with envy!" etc, etc, etc (86).

participates in establishing and reinforcing existing sexual and racial norms and hierarchies.[139] It is not surprising, then, that the text confirms prevailing stereotypes about African Americans as a "less evolved" race.

Rebels takes a well-meaning if problematic approach to the Negro Problem, extremely critical of overt racism and verbal or physical abuse of blacks while actively perpetuating racist assumptions. Its racism is of the benevolent paternalistic variety that poses African Americans as a lesser race in need of moral and intellectual guidance from white men. As Custis instructs a guest (in a reference to their horses that aptly sums up his attitude towards their human stock), he and Pierre are against "vulgarly obtruding our mastership. We best show that [our mastership] in our kindness to them, and they are not slow to recognize it" (124). Dr. Pierre and his son keep black servants who are as extremely loyal to and adoring of their white bosses as they are undercutting and insulting to each other. Two of these servants, Mammy Cindie and her grandson Marcus Aurelius (Relius), are main characters. The speech of all the black characters is presented in thick dialect, highly differentiated from that of white speakers, and there are many interludes in the story that treat readers to minstrel-esque scenes of ignorant, humorous dialogue between African Americans.[140]

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139 To be fair, the novel also makes some serious interventions in contemporary constructions of rugged masculinity. Custis may be a "poem in athletics" but he does not use his muscles for competition or violence as Bill Tempest does. In a two-page long speech on the subject, Custis claims that a "true manly boy" is gentle, tender, chivalric, just, fair, modest, never coarse or prudish, and morally brave (76-77).

140 The narrative strategically uses African American characters like Cindie to voice and reinforce its racist positions. For instance, in the exposition, Cindie provides the reader with a monologue spoken to herself that implicitly contrasts the virtuous Doctor who is her master with the "skinny, no-count white devil" Tom Tait (a "dollarless degenerate" who lives down the street and isn't "fit" for anything besides "fiddlin' and drinkin' whisky") and " 'cietful…yaller niggers" like her grandson Relius, whose sinful and frisky ways are linked to his being a mulatto (8). Similarly, Relius repeatedly objects to Custis helping him with the excess of luggage brought by Dr. Pierre's family, insisting, "I'd ruther break my back squar' in two dan see you make a nigger of yo' sef for Miss Barb'ry or any of her tribe" (121).

Even though Cindie and Relius are presented "sympathetically," what virtue they have seems to be attributed to their superior training. The rest of the narrative straightforwardly represents blacks as less-evolved and prone to degeneracy, specifically perpetuating the myth of black male rapist. Besides having two white female characters attacked by black men for no apparent reason necessitated by the plot, Custis's half-brother Pelham identifies rape as a race-specific phenomenon, "the crime for which negroes are lynched in the South." He calls it "one of the worst crimes," but also acknowledges that it "is the act of the beast." Strangely reaffirming white racial superiority, he argues that the worst crime is the [white] man's "seduction" because it "is the act of a villain. The villain thinks. The beast does not" (200). This discussion is just one of the many that is negotiating with emergent intersectional constructions of race, gender, and sexuality. Indeed, the novel is as preoccupied with sex as it is with race, and socialism is connected with the rehabilitation of both. The most unsympathetic character in the novel is Dr. Pierre's unredeemably wrong-headed sister, who combines overt racism with prudery and cupidity, representing to a tee the reprehensible status quo. Her character, as the highly affected foil for the artless young Custis, reinforces the deep connections in the novel between racial, sexual, and socioeconomic fitness.[141]

There are two great tragedies in the novel, and both are sexual. The first is Fred Huntington's seduction and abandonment of Dorothy, and the other is the spoiled Rutherford (who is the son of Dr. Pierre's evil sister) having sex with Relius's mulatto wife. Relius kills Rutherford when he discovers the tryst. These events are calculated to show the current "perversion of the sexual instinct! And the suffering, the tragedy it brings upon the race!" (144).

141 In keeping with the typical "others of evolution," women also tend to be presented as less evolved. Besides being the most backward villains in the text, women such as Virginia are presented as extreme exceptions to the feminine norm. As Custis observes, "naturalness in a girl is so rare that it really invigorates me" (121). In this discussion of sexual crimes, male power is also consolidated—though women are identified as victims of a gross sexual double standard, they never escape the role of victims of male power throughout the narrative.

Mammy Cindie is actually propositioned by Rutherford before he takes up with Relius's wife, but she denies him by asserting the racial impossibility of their relations: "I is a decent, wirtuous nigger, I is. And I is black, black, black…I is black! I is a Custis nigger!" (136). Her assertion of blackness is meant to imply that she is not mulatto and shares her former masters' prohibition on miscegenation since "De Custis men folks dey's all bin, as fur back as you trace 'em, seemly and wirtuous white gen'men. Dey ain't believin' in mixin' deir blood wid nigger blood" (137). Virtue, then, is associated with racial purity and sexual normality.

Whereas Relius's wife seems to be inherently depraved as an unfortunate consequence of her mixed blood, Dr. Pierre laments that Rutherford's perversion was not hereditary and so could have been prevented by the proper environmental influences. Instead, his sister Barbara's hypocritical prudishness has tainted his mind; his repression has led to sexual deviance. Sex education, which Dr. Pierre has undertaken very early with Custis, is the more plot-driven objective of the novel than socialism. The Doctor asserts that because Custis "got no perverted view of truths" and "the knowledge of the sexual function was revealed to him by no vulgar or unclean mind" that he "is approaching puberty untainted by any secret vice, his organs all beautifully developed, his mind the home of the whitest thoughts. He is coming to his manhood like a white rose unfolding" (69).

Illustrating "a new interest in the normality of the sexual impulse" (Bender *Evolution* 19), Virginia and Custis provide a model couple whose attraction for one another is instinctive and hygienic. They are the "infallibly harmonious" and "enduringly constant" mating birds in Hurt's formulation of sexuality under socialism. Custis feels an instant "delight" upon seeing her, "the girl [who] was so abundantly alive, so robustly beautiful" (80). She instantly returns his admiration in their ensuing "frank intercourse," which terrifies her fastidious governess (81), and—unlike in the romantic triangulations so common to the courtship stories discussed

in the first chapter—their affections never wane or waver though they are apart for years. When they later reunite, their sexual relations are described in anxiously hygienic ways. For instance, Raymond describes their first embrace with "their two young mouths, *clean as clover*, drifted into a long, rapturous kiss" (225). The same tension perceptible within images of socialism as wholly natural and utterly civilized inheres in this representation of sex as simultaneously the cleanest, most natural thing in the world but not in the least animalistic.[142] This progressive representation of sex is obviously compensatory: to project sex as healthy, it must be made rigorously normative. The same, then, is true with socialism: the cooperative commonwealth must be a projection of the existing racial and sexual ideals.

The SP novels by England, Steere, and Raymond, while dramatically different from each other in many ways, are similar in that they are among the few to represent African Americans and are all future-oriented narratives with utopian bents. Their prospective approaches suggest how the Negro Problem was understood as a future problem to be solved by (white) socialists and how blacks were often not included in the early SP's vision of their proletarian constituency. The evolutionary underpinnings of these narratives and their projection of eugenic ideals associate socialism with whiteness and masculinity, imagining the cooperative commonwealth as initiated by specific races and sexes instead of a particular class. Then again, as seen in their choice of heroes, the specific races and sexes imagined as bringing about socialism are implicitly or explicitly "classed" in these novels as middle-class or upper-class.

142 This is essentially sexual selection without the Sex Problem. Such descriptions detach sex from the discourses of aggression, violence, and competition that characterize Darwinian understandings of natural selection. Instead, perfect bodies are produced through rational, reciprocal, cooperative relations—in many ways, the expressions of a disembodied ideal.

B. NEW IMMIGRANT NOVELS

While the absence of African American characters in early-twentieth-century novels written by socialists is perhaps not surprising given the make-up of the early SP, the lack of immigrant characters is more unexpected. While immigrants made up a significant percentage of the SP (a share that was constantly on the rise throughout the Progressive era), not many socialist immigrants wrote novels and not many novels written by socialists featured immigrants as their protagonists.[143] The absence of socialist immigrant novels is perhaps a concession to nativist fears of immigrants as disgruntled purveyors of Old World radicalism. Or it may be a sign that novels were aimed a native-born American audience, as is suggested by Theresa Malkiel's *Diary of a Shirtwaist Striker* (1911), wherein she chooses a white, native-born worker as her diarist. In doing so, Malkiel is able to model the proper development of solidarity, sympathy, and admiration for the Jewish immigrants who make up the bulk of the narrator's fellow strikers.[144] However, it also suggests the nativist tendencies within American socialism, especially during an era that saw the largest wave of immigration in U.S. history.[145]

Whereas in the nineteenth century most émigrés were of Northern European descent, 70.8% of immigrants came from Central and Southeastern Europe between 1901-1910 (compared with only 7.2% in the 1870s and 18.3% in the 1880s). In addition, three-quarters of

143 The obvious exception is the era's most popular socialist novel, *The Jungle*, though it might have been a strategic move on Sinclair's part to focus on Christian immigrants. The other exceptions not discussed in this chapter (all of which feature Jewish immigrants) include Henry Berman's extremely cynical and not very popular novel, *The Worshippers* (1906), Abraham Cahan's extremely cynical and well-received novel, *The Rise of David Levinsky* (1917), and Arthur Bullard's optimistic and popular, *Comrade Yetta* (1913).

144 Indeed, the novel's first person narrative opens with the heroine declaring herself a "free-born American" (81). Writing from this perspective also allows Malkiel to more effectively critique American democracy and the freedom the narrator claims to possess as an American citizen in the opening lines.

145 Some of the native-born elements in the SP emerged out of prior radical traditions in the late nineteenth century such as the populist movement, which had strong nativist tendencies.

"new" immigrants settled in the urban North (Nies 7). These changing demographics were also beginning to significantly challenge Anglo-Saxon supremacy, contributing to the gradual reconstruction and classification of whiteness to include most of those ethnicities that fit under the broad racial designation of "Caucasian" (Brown xiv). While today we might refer to these differences of national origin under the heading of ethnicity, "race" was still the dominant terminology for this category during the Progressive era, signaling the close discursive relationship between race and nation.[146]

Though it had no direct effect on policy or legislation, one of the more hotly contended debates in the early SP was over their stance on immigration restriction, particularly with regard to Asian workers even though they represented only 3% of all immigrants from 1894-1914 (*Historical Statistics* 1976). They did ultimately pass a resolution in favor of (Asian) immigration restriction, though its wording was careful to avoid explicitly racist terms. The "majority" position was euphemistically phrased as a rejection of "immigration artificially stimulated"[147] and "the international importation of workingmen from foreign countries for the purpose of breaking strikes or weakening or destroying labor organizations."[148] Eventually the exclusionary resolutions of American Socialists with their thinly-veiled racism were determined to be in conflict with The International, whose Stuttgart Resolution adopted at the 1907 Conference called for international solidarity amongst all peoples in the face of probable war.

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146 "Race" is most often used in the context of nationality and with reference to immigrants (rather than, for instance, African Americans).

147 "Artificially stimulated" immigration "for the benefit of steamship companies, land agents and similar commercial concerns" (e.g., contract labor) is in this case contrasted with "immigration *naturally* and *normally* produced by existing economic conditions" or "class immigration produced by political causes" (208). The majority report, then, is using evolutionary science to make a highly-charged and arbitrary distinction between natural and unnatural forms of immigration in order to condemn the latter.

148 Pg. 208 in Morris Hillquit, "Immigration in the United States," in *Race, Ethnicity, and Gender in Early Twentieth-Century American Socialism*, Ed. Sally Miller (New York: Garland, 1996): 199-209.

The resolution pronounced nationalism to be a malevolent tool that the ruling class wielded to keep the working class divided against itself. In spite of this strong stance, The International was not that interested in policies or resolutions related to race or immigration (or gender for that matter), considering these to be localized nation-and-region-specific issues (Miller 4). Hence, American socialists often felt empowered to resist mandates of The International (which weren't enforced anyway) since they considered their movement to be operating in a cultural and geographic context that was manifestly distinct from that of the European majority.

Perhaps native-born socialists' buying into widespread fears about the "Yellow Peril," was in part due to their anxieties about the increasing number of immigrants in their own ranks, when SP leadership was dominated by native-born citizens and assimilated English-speaking immigrants (Miller 10). New immigrants were typically confined to "foreign language federations" and more likely to be opponents of the SP's "majority" position in its endorsement of immigration restriction.[149] Novels written by socialists evoke such anxiety—for instance Jack London's unflattering depiction of Jewish socialists in *Martin Eden* or I.K. Friedman's ambivalent portrayal of "mongrel democracy" in *The Radical* (a term in fact also used by London in *Martin Eden*). There were, however, a few novels that began to take up the evolutionary tropes in order to undermine and/or revise them, challenging the eugenic predispositions that associated socialism and civilization with whiteness or perpetuated dubious distinctions between social and economic equality.

149 See for instance, the 1912 response of Leo Laukki (a member of the Finnish Federation and the national Committee on Immigration formed after the 1910 national congress) to the Asiatic Resolution, which is a much stronger critique of immigration exclusion than John Spargo's minority report. Letter, 4/15/1912; Socialist Party Correspondence, Series 1: National Correspondence; TAM 056.9; box 1; folder 4; The Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, Elmer Holmes Bobst Library, New York University Libraries. It should also be noted that Jewish Americans comprised the bulk of the white funders and leadership of civil rights organizations (like the NAACP).

The work of Isaac Kahn Friedman provides an interesting case study in this respect since the shift between his two novels evinces a shifting attitude toward socialist evolutionism. Friedman was the son of German Jewish immigrants, but he never wrote about Jewish people or immigrants and always published his work under the initials "I.K." as if to minimize the public's recognition of his Jewish heritage. While his first novel *By Bread Alone* (1901) in many ways sets the standard for socialist eugenic romances,[150] his follow-up, *The Radical* (1907), makes some meaningful alterations to the formula, which wind up critiquing the implications of his earlier effort. The protagonists of *By Bread Alone* are the perfect, native-born, Anglo-Saxon, upper-crust Blair Carrhart and Evangeline Marvin who happily marry and set off to bring about the cooperative commonwealth. The villains in the story are swarthy immigrants—Jewish and Italian respectively—who are dangerous radicals that threaten the heroes' best efforts for constructive progress with violence, free love, and anarchy.[151] *The Radical* is markedly different in tone and content. If Blair is a model of "rugged masculinity" (6) who emerges as an "Arthur of the industrial age" (12), *The Radical*'s hero, Bruce McAllister, is anything but a fine physical specimen (although he manages to snag one for a wife in the end).

Bruce is a working-class career politician, lovingly nick-named the "Butcher Boy" in line with his first job description. He himself is Irish (a historically colonized race, but among those immigrant groups quickly being accepted as "white" in the U.S.[152]), but his countenance evokes

150 Published in 1901, the same year as the Unity Convention, his novel also sets the standards for SP novels more generally.

151 The novel has the socialist Carrhart competing with the shady Jewish and Italian anarchists for influence over the mass of blonde Polish immigrant-workers who could go either way (sexually and ideologically).

152 In Noel Ignatiev's book, *How the Irish Became White* (1996), he places the beginning of this process in the nineteenth century, during Reconstruction.

the general darkly-complexioned racial others who make up his "mongrel democracy."[153] Indeed, the description offered of him suggests those atavistic, simian qualities reminiscent of imperialist caricatures of Irish people, given his "swarthy face, with its crowning mop of black hair, the ridiculously big ears, the slightly protruding underlip" along with the "thin lips of his big mouth" (11).

However, instead of representing degeneracy, the novel recasts the meaning of his physical unseemliness by explaining that it is symbolically parallel to the "ugly truths" about the modern world that he seeks to reveal and change (49). These "ugly truths" call into question the whole rhetoric of civilization and its association with millennial progress. With his "thin shoulders stooped" (12) and "that long gaunt figure" (11), Bruce is aligned with "the ruins of vanished civilizations" (14) whereas his upper-class love interest, Inez, with her "regular face with its finely chiseled features," her "robust form…solid flesh and vigorous muscles," and her "radiant health that traced pink tints in her white-as-ivory cheeks" (18), is associated with the past glories of Classical civilization now "dead" (46).

Also by contrast to Bruce, the two villain types in the story—the jaded politicos Georgia and Shaw—are dazzlingly golden and gorgeous upon first glance, specifically introduced to the reader through their strong sexual appeal. Their striking appearances mask their fundamental baseness, dissociating (seemingly) fit bodies from "white thoughts" and

153 It should be noted that Friedman still does not choose a Jewish or "new immigrant" protagonist though he is coded as a racial other and even at one point likened to an Old Testament martyr: "The lines on his face furrowed deeper and deeper through that swarthy skin as if his were the sorrow of a Moses fated to stand forgotten on Pisgah while his people stormed the fabled land" (299). Also, Bruce is not explicitly a socialist, though his rhetoric is identical with that of the SP and his goal is to usher in the "cooperative commonwealth" (232). Instead, his political alignment is referred to as "the radical wing of the Minority," presumably a progressive Democrat.

problematizing natural selection as an ideal for rational racial advancement.[154] However, by the end, the narrative sees its three fine physical specimens acknowledge Bruce as the new standard of fitness, crowning him as "a *man* anyway" (303), "a man among men" (309), and "the strongest of men" (350) since has risen above the material considerations of "women, money, [and] place" (349). Indeed, the final test of his manhood is his repeated resistance to having his ideological commitments compromised by his sexual attraction to Inez (which, of course, ironically secures her attraction for him).

From the start, Bruce is presented as a uniter of people. He is a compelling orator whose speeches are capable of overcoming class, racial, and sexual divisions: "His audience became a single individual and in that amalgam of Pole, Swede, Russian Jew, Croat, Irishman, Hungarian, what not, the aristocratic Inez Hammersmith, no longer able to hold herself disdainfully aloof, mingled and lost herself" (14). Democracy, then, is posed as a racial amalgamation and the dissolution (rather than reaffirmation) of a particular racial identity.

Undermining the presumed Anglo-Saxon superiority put forth in *By Bread Alone*, Bruce subversively associates whiteness with the idle rich through comparing them with "lilies" while "the poor are the soil out of which these beautiful flowers spring" (16). Extending the racialized class metaphor, he asks his audience to, "Consider the soil; the more beautiful these

154 Georgia and Shaw appear fit but really are degenerate. Their influence on the highest ranks of government moreover implies they are responsible for national/racial degeneracy and deadlock. Shaw is introduced through women's attraction for him: "Several acquaintances of the sex bowed to him…Others looked at him with a quick, shy glance of admiration, for Shaw's appearance did no dishonor to his statesmanship" (67). The narrator further notes that Shaw's "fine figure, erect and manly, his intellectual forehead, his attractive face, his Hyperion locks and whiskers give him the power to attract always" (67). Similarly, Georgia is introduced as "a golden and a radiant presence" (91). Both of them use their sexual appeal to manipulate others to their own political and financial advantages. Georgia even involved herself in a mercenary marriage with an older politician who she divorced after having an affair with Shaw. In the end, both are ruined by their selfish machinations when Georgia commits suicide and Shaw loses his money and mistress.

lilies grow the more exhausted it becomes. What pleasure or profit has the soil from its labors, do not even the very lilies that it bears despise the grime and *blackness* that have brought them forth? The *white* hands of the human lily are a disgrace to it" (my emphasis 16). In other words, Bruce flips the script to associate whiteness and fitness with immorality and parasitism. He also accepts the working-class as marked and dark, a "blackness" that is ultimately associated with Bruce's egalitarian and cooperative values. This association is reinforced by the narrator eventually referring to the swarthy Bruce as an androgynous "Democracy" incarnate in a passage that pointedly juxtaposes democracy with the actual workings of the U.S. Government through the same racialized metaphor:

> Democracy, sensitively aware of its swarthy hue and ugly countenance, examined these nine faces [of the Supreme Court Justices], all of them good to look on, venerable, conscious of accomplishment, marked for their own by acumen and intellectuality—these democracy examined closely and felt itself out of place, for what singular reason it knew not itself. (336)

Like Georgia and Shaw (who are tied to the Executive and Legislative branches of government respectively), the Justices of the Judicial Branch are "good to look on" but their good looks in no way portend moral or social good. Democracy is an "outsider," to the supposedly republican government; its marginalization is expressed through its racial otherness. On the other hand, if democracy has a swarthy hue and ugly countenance, it is in fact because it is "less evolved" than the "plutocracy" in place, which suggests that when democracy is finally achieved, it, too, will be "good to look on." Affirming the hegemonic discourse of fitness, this passage implies that once democracy reaches its highest form under socialism, it will no longer be swarthy like Bruce.

Thus, in spite of its temporary subversion of dominant racial discourses, the novel does not wholly depart from them. The text pointedly has not given up on "civilization" even as it has critiqued the "too-complex" "modern" variety of it. If the connections between whiteness and civilization have been destabilized, it is because in contemporary society, whiteness is hypocritically dependent on blackness whereas the utopian alternative is to have universal whiteness with no dark underbelly. Accordingly, the novel closes with a vision of the "coming democracy of the morrow" or the "Rome of the future" aligned with Inez's "Greek beauty" (361, 46). Bruce's ultimately leaving Washington D.C. may signal, like his physical shortcomings, how he and the races and classes he represents are not yet ready to assume power, but they can work to "remodel the body of the city" so that it is not "lagging far behind when it should lead and direct" (360-361). As the narrator has repeatedly reminded the reader of Bruce's "crude, unformed taste" (33), his marriage to the paragon of beauty, health, fashion, and good taste in Inez symbolizes the merger of good values and good aesthetics, a union that anticipates when the "spiritual and physical [will] come together" and the Capitol will no longer be a place of "swaggering negations" (360). Indeed, this symbolic reading of their marriage is suggested by Bruce himself, whose "final picture" of his bitter experiences in national politics is optimistically condensed into "nothing but the inevitable triumph of his cause and the conquest of Inez" (360). In the end, then, Friedman offers meaningful critiques in *The Radical*, but winds up grandly reinstating the very discourses the text previously dismantles.

A marriage with a similar symbolic valence is featured Elias Tobenkin's *Witte Arrives* (1916), which is one of the very few SP novels to feature a "new immigrant" protagonist. *Witte* tells the story of Emil Witowski, a Jewish emigrant from Russia, who triumphs over poverty and prejudice to become a successful writer. Often compared to Mary Antin's famous

immigrant autobiography *The Promised Land* (1912), the semi-autobiographical novel[155] is much in keeping with Gustavo Perez-Firmat's definition of "immigrant literature" as prospective and assimilative (much more optimistic and less ambivalent about America and assimilation than other contemporary Jewish socialist writers such as Abraham Cahan). The title suggests as much, since—besides featuring the Witowski's Americanized name, "Witte"—the novel is less about Emil's literal arrival in the U.S. than it is about his gradual figurative arrival as a U.S. citizen who had become "peculiarly American" (293). This attainment is marked by the publication of Witte's first novel and his engagement to a Gentile woman, blocking out his multiple abortive literary and romantic struggles as an immigrant.

The novel was published after the start of WWI abroad, when there was a renewed panic about "hyphenated Americans" whose national loyalties were in question.[156] In the lead-up to the Bolshevik Revolution, fears about "hyphenated Americans" were likely linked to socialist agitation as much as they were to Pro-German sentiments. In *Witte*, Tobenkin critiques and reinforces the American Dream, arguing for the value of new immigrants as citizens while integrating the hero's inherited (foreign) socialist values into established American values and myths.[157]

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155 Tobenkin emigrated from Russia to Madison, WI with his parents at the age of seventeen. He received a BA and MA from University of Wisconsin before pursuing a career in journalism. *Witte* was his first novel. See George Gordon's biography of Tobenkin in *The Men who Make Our Novels* (New York: Moffat, Yard, and Co, 1919): 198-204.

156 The term "hyphenated Americans" emerged at the end of the nineteenth century in the U.S. and caught on as a pejorative in the early twentieth century. Theodore Roosevelt gave a famous Columbus-Day speech to the Knights of Columbus in 1915 after the outbreak of the War in which he argued that, "There is no room in this country for hyphenated Americanism...There is no such thing as a hyphenated American who is a good American. The only man who is a good American is the man who is an American and nothing else." See "Roosevelt Bars the Hyphenated: No Room in This Country for Dual Nationality, He Tells the Knights of Columbus" in *The New York Times* (10/15/1915): 1, 5.

157 The novel actually includes a sample review of Witte's first volume of nonfiction, *The Fate of Democracies*, that uses his work as an argument against immigration restriction since "it would be folly

Though problematic in its conciliatory attitude, *Witte Arrives* makes an important intervention in American socialist discourses by posing racial prejudice as a problem that is both different from and on par with class struggle. Socialism remains in the background of the story—Witte proclaims to be a socialist converted by his uncle who is a Russian revolutionary and much of the rhetoric of the narrative is informed by socialist discourse. However, Witte never becomes an active member of the SP, and the main thrust of the story is about social problems related to "race," not class. The narrative actually embeds the complementary novel that foregrounds a class critique in that Witte plans (like many socialists of the era) to write "*The Uncle Tom's Cabin* of industry" (128), which is indeed written and eventually enthusiastically published though we never hear any of the particulars of its plot.

The different generations of love stories in the novel mirror this dual or shifting focus. It has become a popular piece of lore how Witte's father, Aaron, gave up a prestigious career as a rabbi and Hebrew scholar for the sake of marrying a dowry-less peasant woman in Witte's mother, Masha. Their marriage, then, is in defiance of class conventions while Witte's eventual engagement is in defiance of racial conventions. While there is much class analysis and criticism contained in the harrowing tale, Witte ultimately achieves the American Dream of class mobility through hard work by becoming a successful author after a prolonged struggle. However, his final realization of the Dream occurs with him overcoming racial rather than class-based inequality through an "inter-racial" marriage.[158] His defiance of the racial conventions that have long kept him from embracing his love for a Gentile woman is presented as the final climax of the novel and in many ways as his most radical action. With World War

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to close our doors on immigrants when they bring to our shores such splendid material for Americanism, such forceful and uncompromising champions of democratic institutions and republican ideals" (295).

158 Again, these are the terms deployed by novel itself: "What stood between Witte and Barbara was *race*. He did not mince words about it" (298).

I as the historical backdrop, Witte sees "race distinctions and national hatreds" growing more virulent instead of subduing, and "love" is presented as the only "way out" (301-302).

Such love seems to go against rather than with the evolutionary grain as imagined in other socialist (r)evolutionary romances. Similar to Bruce and Inez's multi-year affair in Friedman's *The Radical*, the courtship between Witte and Barbara is long, arduous, and by no means based on an instantaneous attraction. These slow-developing affections offer conspicuous contrasts with the love-and-sexual-selection-at-first-sight that characterizes the heterosexual (r)evolutionary romances addressed in the first part of this chapter. Indeed, there is no suggestion that Witte's marriage is first and foremost the product of rational sexual selection based on biological fitness.

On the contrary, as with Bruce McAllister, the text takes pains to emphasize that Witte is by no means a promising physical specimen. Instead, his unimpressive body is permanently marked by the "Russian pale" of the Old World in the "ungainliness of his frame, his physical shortcomings," and in his being "below medium height" with "shoulders a trifle stooped" and "chest caved in" (84). He frequently compares himself to Americans and finds himself wanting, such as Miss Graves' vigorous brother who "looked every inch the New England Yankee" while Witte "looked decidedly plebeian in his baggy clothes" (220). Unlike the socialist heroes who have preceded him—men who always seem to be so potent and in control—Witte acknowledges his "fear" and "helplessness in the arena of life" (202). However, the novel in part recasts his vulnerability as a source of revolutionary strength against dominant understandings of fitness: "Most people can only see power when it is manifested in a strong arm, athletic physique, or daring feats. But there is another sort of power in the world, a more fruitful power frequently—the power which resists passively and endures patiently. Emil has this power"

(70). Thus, Emil's "power" is explicitly set against the privileged Anglo-Saxon hypermasculinity of the Bill Tempest and Custis Christian variety.

Then again, much like her brother, Witte's native-born "Gentile" fiancée Barbara (who is the educated secretary of a magazine editor) is desirable precisely because she is a fine, highly evolved American specimen: "What had impressed Witte most about Miss Graves on his various visits to Thornton's office was her evident high breeding. In her manner she was simple and democratic, yet she walked like a queen. Her features were delicate and yet there was a deliberateness in them. Her bearing, the way she bowed or smiled, bespoke great culture and refinement" (220). In another move similar to the romance in *The Radical*, while Witte is less than fit himself, he is attracted to the fitness of others—and native-born Americans are depicted as being an especially fit race.[159] However, the difference here is that Barbara's attractiveness is constructed as a result of her environment and nurture more than an innate biological superiority. Functioning in part symbolically as an enticement to assimilation, her "high breeding" reflects the best of America, just as Russia "had marked [Witte] as her own" (84).

On the other hand, it is possible that there is some unease registered in the novel about (especially the biological ramifications of) his cross-racial marriage in that Witte's fiancée is named "Miss *Graves*." Witte in fact marries before, to another immigrant of Russian-Jewish extraction whose family was imprisoned in Siberia for their revolutionary activities. Though Helen seeks to be his "comrade," their marriage has a tragic outcome—she aborts their first child because they cannot afford to raise it and then quickly dies after the stillbirth of their

159In both of these novels, the male protagonists are allowed to be strikingly ugly, but the female protagonists are still strikingly beautiful. This narrative strategy, then, upholds the typical gender stereotype of men being able to transcend the limitations of their bodies (and be valued for their mind, heart, soul, etc) while women cannot in the same way.

second from complications related to pregnancy, presumably due to her earlier operation. If this first immigrant marriage is barren, the second cross-racial union produces only intellectual fruit, a transition indicated by the impossible dream of his first wife and their son "leading a delightful family life," one night being replaced in Witte's reveries by "a picture of Barbara…Only Barbara was not playing with a child on the lawn. Instead she was sitting in a reclining chair, book in hand…" (247). It is strongly suggested that their contribution to the future social order will be confined to making books, not babies, which may indicate a lingering apprehension about realizing or representing an inter-racial marriage with its specter of degeneracy. Witte can "pass" intellectually—his disembodied (intentionally anonymous) writing is even seen as quintessentially American,[160] but his body will always identify him as other, since, "The Russian Pale had put her stamp upon his physique…mark[ing] him as her own" (84). Consequently, his union with Barbara is rendered more harmless by its predominantly cerebral nature.

These novels written by immigrants began to undermine many of the eugenic ideals in circulation in SP novels, challenging some of the racist assumptions of socialist evolutionism and tentatively suggesting the advantages of "cross-racial" alliances as a means for bringing about social change. However, even though the romantic plotlines employed by Friedman and Tobenkin intervene in some of the problematic implications of (r)evolutionary romances, their narrative strategies still rely upon the social worth of the seemingly degenerate ethnic men being validated by unions with extremely fit native women. Moreover, both of the

160 "Witte had become peculiarly American. He had drunk deep not only of American ideals, but of American culture and American traditions. His articles and editorials in the Age attracted attention for their Emersonian flavor. The cultural background of Witte's writing was that of New England. Not one in a thousand readers of these unsigned editorials on American life and problems and ideals would have suspected that they were written by any one not of American birth. Many, indeed, would have placed the writer of such articles as none other than a scion of one of the oldest American families" (293).

protagonists' ultimate romantic and professional successes tend to verify American meritocracy on the one hand and socialist vanguardism on the other. Thus, they do not in the end significantly challenge the associations between American civilization, whiteness, and physical fitness, only deferring socialist fantasies of perfectable bodies.[161]

C. CONCLUSION

"Is there one thing in the known universe that is not subject to the law of evolution?" – Jack London, *Martin Eden* (1909)[162]

If Jack London was the paradigmatic example of socialist evolutionism and its ideological limitations, his novels also uniquely illustrate how evolution and science are cultural narratives that might be retold and reinterpreted multiple ways. The fact that London's virile young male heroes Ernest Everhard of *The Iron Heel* (1908) and Martin Eden could have the exact same scientific references and yet follow them to remarkably different conclusions politically and personally (the former to socialism, revolutionary fervor, and martyrdom and the latter to

161 Native-born, Harvard-educated writer Arthur Bullard refuted these tropes explicitly and more radically in his two novels written when he was a member of the SP: *A Man's World* (1912) and *Comrade Yetta* (1913). I will discuss these novels in detail in the fourth chapter, but in *A Man's World*, the millionaire reformer Norman's marriage to Nina, an extremely poor Italian prostitute, serves as the vehicle for the narrator's input on the "discussion in the scientific circles of those days about the relative force of heredity and environment in the formation of character" (217). The narrator not only says that watching Nina's subsequent development kept him from the popular error of privileging the "congenital element," but also that Norman's later impregnation of his wife communicated that he had drawn the same conclusion and "was not afraid of Nina's heredity" (218). In *Comrade Yetta*, the beautiful title character ultimately rejects her instant attraction to a burly, Anglo-Saxon intellectual to find a more meaningful love with an unsightly fellow Jewish immigrant with whom she goes on to have multiple children. Far from selecting her eventual (hunchbacked) husband for his fitness, Yetta finally falls in love with him (after a tumultuous multi-year courtship) when he is deathly ill.

162 Pg. 225.

reactionary individualism, existential ennui, and suicide) reveals that the "law of evolution" was not the singular or static rule it was made out to be for the sake of ideological justification.[163]

Socialists' reliance upon evolutionary theory for cultural legitimation became less and less effective in the wake of social scientific advances (for instance, Franz Boas's cultural relativism[164]). It left their radical projects doubly-compromised as inaccurate and undemocratic, a blow from which the Party never fully recovered even after its members did begin to revise their theoretical orientations. With the U.S. entrance into WWI, many of the SP's public intellectuals and advocates of SP evolutionism (mostly white, native-born men) defected from the Party. Meanwhile, the percentage of immigrants increased in Party membership due to its anti-war stance, and the movement became more international in its orientation while toning down its patriotic rhetoric. After the Russian Revolution took place, American socialists could no longer boastfully project themselves (in the vein of England, Steere, and Raymond) as the evolutionary and socialist vanguard whose "fashioning hand

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163 London admits as much himself in a scene wherein Martin Eden visits a socialist meeting to argue with them about the laws of biological and historical development. Though Martin is not converted, he admits that, "They shook him with lines of thought that were new to him; and gave him insights, not into new biological laws, but into new applications of the old laws," drawing out a difference between facts and interpretation that destabilizes assumptions of scientific authority (309). In *The Chasm* (1911), George Cram Cook actually uses London as the socially-conservative foil for his socialist hero, who asserts that London's error in privileging the "survival-of-the-fittest" struggle as necessary to racial progress is the error of confusing "biology and sociology" (138).

164 Franz Boas (1858 – 1942) was an influential German-American anthropologist whose work resisted totalizing or hierarchical racial explanations of social phenomenon. He laid the theoretical groundwork for cultural relativism as early as 1887 when he argued that the main point of ethnography should be the "dissemination of the fact that civilization is not something absolute, but that it is relative, and that our ideas and conceptions are true only so far as our civilization goes," but the concept was not popularized and widely accepted by social scientists until the 1910s (quoted in Degler 67). Boas's thought challenged SP evolutionism by framing all ideas as "not absolute across the spectrum of human experience" but rather "relative to our environment" and by suggesting that one race or culture was not inherently better than another (Degler 65-67).

[would soon be] felt in every clime" to "joyfully [carry] all the nations of the earth to the new democracy."[165]

However, socialist novelists' engagement with socialist evolutionism also helped to reveal its ideological limitations. (R)evolutionary romances, by exposing science as a narrative with many possible outcomes and interpretations, tend to destabilize the evolutionary "truths" they are trying to reinforce, ultimately paving the way for a radical critique of their own undemocratic principles. Thus, these problematic novels set the stage for a generation of new intellectuals who were critical of the traditional scientific underpinnings of the SP and helped to reimagine socialism and the means of social change.

In all of these novels, evolutionary conceptions of sexuality are entangled with capitalism and socialism insofar as each is tied respectively to racial decline and progress. If socialism is connected here to eugenic ideals and a healthful normative sexuality, widespread fears about disease-ridden, sexually-perverse prostitution provided socialists with vivid supporting evidence for their belief in the degeneracy inherent in capitalism. Hence, the next chapter turns to popular socialist novels of the White Slavery Scare and the economic explanations of prostitution that they helped to popularize. However, more than simply offering the melodramatic antithesis to buttress eugenic understandings of socialism, socialist prostitution narratives ultimately forced the Party itself to reconsider the relationship between economic and social equality often assumed to be separate questions in (r)evolutionary romances.

165 Friedman, *The Radical*, 361-362.

IV. CHAPTER *3*. WHITE SLAVES AND WAGE SLAVES: GENDER AND CLASS IN SOCIALIST PROSTITUTION NARRATIVES

"It would be interesting to know how much of the social conscience of our time had as its first insight the prostitute on the city pavement. We do not have to force an interest, as we do about the trusts, or even about the poor. For the problem lies close indeed to the dynamics of our own natures." - Walter Lippmann, *A Preface to Politics* (1913)[166]

If Walter Lippman wondered, "how much of the social conscience of our time had as its first insight the prostitute on the city pavement" (123), this is actually a recurring trope in novels written by members of the Socialist Party of America (SP), indicating the extent to which radical understandings of class were often bound up in normative constructions of gender and sexuality. The socialist (r)evolutionary romances and eugenic ideals discussed in the last chapter enunciated a concurrence between socialism and a normative sexuality that was heterosexual, monogamous, based on natural selection, and impervious to artificial social or monetary pressures. Prostitution, premised on promiscuous sex strictly for financial gain, was a highly visible dystopian counter-model to such millennial views on sexuality. The prostitute as a figure was not only imminently suitable as a degenerate capitalist foil for hygienic socialist sexuality, but also one that tapped deeply into contemporary cultural fixations.

166 Pgs. 122-123. Walter Lippmann (1889-1974) was a prominent journalist and social thinker. A one-time socialist politician in Schenectady New York, he left the SP before WWI and became a foreign diplomat during it.

Prostitution was an issue of transatlantic concern at the turn of the century, but nowhere was the push for eliminating the vice so fervent as in Progressive-Era America. Once seen as a "necessary evil," during this time period it became known as *The* Social Evil, with citizens advocating for not just reform but eradication of the trade. It is hardly surprising, then, that prostitution is a major theme of novels written by socialists who saw literature as a means for popular education as they strove to awaken "the social conscience of [their] time." Prostitutes make an appearance in the work of many SP novelists, such as Theresa Malkiel's *The Diary of a Shirtwaist Striker* (1910), Upton Sinclair's *Love's Pilgrimage* (1911) and *Sylvia* (1913), Ernest Poole's *The Harbor* (1915), and Elias Tobekin's *Witte Arrives* (1916). Prostitute characters are featured in *Rebels of the New South* (1904) by Walter Marion Raymond, *The Jungle* (1906) by Upton Sinclair, *The Scarlet Shadow* (1907) by Walter Hurt, *The Mills of Mammon* (1909) by James Brower, *A Little Sister of the Poor* (1911) by Josephine Conger-Kaneko, *The Nine-Tenths* (1911) by James Oppenheim, *A Man's World* (1912) and *Comrade Yetta* (1913) by Arthur Bullard. And, two novels produced by socialists were primarily about prostitutes: Reginald Wright Kauffman's *The House of Bondage* (1910) and Estelle Baker's *The Rose Door* (1911), which were, in their day, the most popular mainstream prostitution novel and most popular novel published by a U.S. socialist press respectively. Walter Rideout sees "[t]he fact that all of these [prostitution-themed] novels…are grouped at the end of the century's first decade and the beginning of the second" as "indicat[ing] how responsive the radical novelists were, not only to Marxist theory, but also to the current preoccupations of the American public" (68). My work focuses on how socialist theory and popular "preoccupations" were mutually-informing categories in novels written by members of the SP. In this chapter, I address socialists' novelistic representation of the prostitute, analyzing how their attempts to position her as a popular symbol of the degradations of the capitalist system to further their

radical economic agenda ultimately put the very relationship between economic and sexual categories into question within Party theory and practice.

In particular, my analysis will focus on *The House of Bondage* (1910), a novel written by socialist journalist Reginald Wright Kauffman[167] that would become the most popular white slave narrative. Amidst hundreds of tracts about prostitution produced by "reformers of every stripe" and over twenty white slave novels (Hapke *Girls* 1, Connelly 114), *The House of Bondage* stood out as a defining piece of literature in the White Slavery Scare and its legislative aftermath. An immediate bestseller, it was heralded as the *Uncle Tom's Cabin* of White Slavery, went through multiple printings, was translated into five languages, and inspired a theatrical drama of the same name (Hapke *Girls* 114).

The House of Bondage (HB) is the story of a small-town Pennsylvania girl, Mary Denbigh, who is lured to New York City by a cadet under the false promise of marriage. Mary, who goes by 'Violet' when a prostitute and Mary Morton when a domestic,[168] manages to escape from the initial brothel, only to find herself imprisoned in a much vaster system of oppression than she initially imagined. Constantly being thrown out of ill-paying jobs when her past is discovered, she eventually winds up back on the street, racked with sickness and prostituting herself in increasingly degrading ways. A full cast of prostitutes and pimps, gangsters and mob bosses, corrupt politicians and cops, naïve reformers and settlement workers, virtuous laborers and debauched aristocrats, domestic drudges and wealthy

167 Kauffman (1877-1959) was a Harvard-educated journalist from a well-to-do family who travelled the world with his wife doing investigative reporting and often coauthoring articles with her. In line with the prominent socialist literary figures of his day (such as Upton Sinclair and Jack London), he was a very prolific author. Besides producing over thirty novels, Kauffman wrote several books of poetry, short story anthologies, screenplays, and volumes of nonfiction on such topics as socialism, pacifism, Mormonism, love, friendship, bachelorhood, wartime Belgium, and the U.S. Navy.

168 Though the novel goes back and forth between calling her Mary and Violet, I will refer to her only as "Mary" in order to avoid confusion.

hypochondriac widows round out the almost-Dickensian social anatomy, illustrating how the whole of society is part of the same rotten System of which prostitution is one symptom. Thus, the titular "house of bondage" is not only the literal brothel, but also presumably a metaphor for capitalism or the "wasteful industrial system," as the narrator refers to it (e.g., 381).

While other authors who dared to represent the prostitute were being censored,[169] Kauffman's ostensibly radical interpretation of prostitution was legally and culturally sanctioned. In the words of one humorous review, the book's "unusual interest is enhanced by the fact that it is almost the only discussion of the social evil so dressed and so endorsed that it is possible to have it on one's desk."[170] Further, the book was championed by prominent capitalists, such as reformer and philanthropist John D. Rockefeller, Jr., who was "so convinced of its educational value…that he has sent copies to a large number of shapers of public opinion, particularly educators."[171] There is likewise evidence that Theodore Roosevelt (who was notoriously critical of socialists and muckrakers) appreciated the novel, even playing

169 Stephen Crane's *Maggie*, David Graham Phillips's *Susan Lenox*, and Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* all faced censorship by publishers and/or the Comstockian Society for the Suppression of Vice. They also had limited circulation once they were published due to their offending popular tastes. For the history of the first two novels, see Laura Hapke's *The Girl Who Went Wrong*, pp. 48 and 142; for the contested publication history of Dreiser's novel, see Donald Pizer's introduction to the volume, *New Essays on Sister Carrie* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), especially pp. 7-12. For a general discussion of Comstock laws, censorship, sexuality, and class at the turn of the century, see Nicola Beisel's *Imperiled Innocents* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1997). Interestingly enough, the theatrical production of *The House of Bondage* "experienced police brutality and intervention on an unprecedented scale" and was shut down by censors almost immediately (Johnson 157). Katie Johnson argues its suppression was likely due to the cultural threat posed by the play's powerful producer and lead actress, the outspoken Cecil Spooner (156-161).

170 "The House of Bondage" Review by William H. Allen in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, V.38, n.1 (July 1911) : 304-306.

171 Ibid.

Kauffman's ideal reader since he implies in a letter to a friend that *HB* led him to take action on the white slavery issue.[172]

According to Mari Jo Buhle, *HB* received similar approval from within the Party, as socialists "rightfully considered it the finest fictional representation of white slavery, the crowning glory of their own impressive array of short stories and propaganda pieces" (256). Rideout notes that Kauffman's bestseller "was so much the novel of prostitution that it went through sixteen printings in less than two years and helped to *popularize Socialist theories in general*" (my emphasis 68). The track record of the novel suggests in the first place that the "economic explanation" of prostitution was the general rule rather than the exception and, in the second (qualifying Rideout's claim), that *HB* certainly helped popularize something, but it was not socialism. It is more likely the case that, like the SP in general, Kauffman's novel "cathected central problems and tensions" of the day, helping the public "to relocate boundaries between acceptable and deviant beliefs" (Kraditor 106), in this case between sex and commerce.

A. WHITE SLAVERY, GENDER, AND THE "ECONOMIC" EXPLANATION OF PROSTITUTION

In the United States, the public alarm surrounding prostitution reached its climax around 1910 with the so-called "White Slavery Scare," which lasted until World War I when the Federal

172 The following is an excerpt from a letter Roosevelt wrote to his friend Cleveland Hoadley Dodge on 1/17/1911: "I have read The House of Bondage…It is…evidently the story of a genuine reformer, of a man who is not using a sad and painful subject to excite prurient interest, but is writing because his whole soul is in revolt against the hideous cruelty and misery he portrays. I would like to meet Kauffman. More than that, I would like to meet him with you and with young Rockefeller, as it was the latter who asked you to send me the story…I feel that on this white slave business he rendered a real and great service in attacking one of the most sickening unspeakably horrible social sins and crimes which now exist. Come in and see me and let me talk the matter over with you" (Roosevelt Letter 5383 Vol. VII, pg. 207).

Government institutionalized antiprostitution demands by legally suppressing the trade and red-light districts. The racially-charged term "white slavery" at first glance seems to denote women who were forced against their will into sexual bondage and kept there through physical force. Indeed, following the nation-building tropes of captivity and seduction narratives, much literature related to antiprostitution campaigns depicted the stories of just such literal white slaves who were kidnapped or lured into the profession with false promises of work or marriage. However, as many historians and critics have noted,[173] the definition of "white slave" was hardly stable, at times referring to all prostitutes regardless of whether or not they had entered the career of their own volition. Similarly, the term "prostitute" had no fixed meaning in contemporary discourse though it did have a fixed gender,[174] potentially referring to any

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173 Ruth Rosen discusses how many authors and reformers, radical novelists among them, took advantage of the public's increased awareness about white slavery to expand the valence of the term beyond its literal definition to show how women are equally enslaved by their socioeconomic circumstances (132-3). Pamela Haag demonstrates how the legislation related to prostitution in the wake of the White Slavery Scare assumed that all prostitution was coercive and that "sexual commerce was a de facto nullification of consent" (67).

174 In Howard B. Woolson's 1921 study, *Prostitution in the United States*, he starts from the assumption that all prostitutes are women: "In any study of prostitution the first subject for consideration is naturally the prostitute *herself*. As a commercialized vice the business of prostitution centers about the *woman* who supplies the human material. In the United States by dictionary definition and by common usage a prostitute is a '*woman* who practices indiscriminate lewdness for hire.' Until 1918 this was also if not a statutory definition at least ordinary legal usage" (my emphasis 35-36). Interestingly, there was only one statutory definition of prostitution prior to 1918 (Section 2372 of the Indiana Law in 1914) which was gender-specific, but all the defendants tried as prostitutes nationally were women with the variability of interpretation being whether or not "the element of gain was considered an essential ingredient of prostitution" (Woolson 35). I take this to be evidence that the cultural supposition that prostitutes were only women was so well-established that it required no formal legal definition. Woolson also notes that a more formalized legal definition of prostitution eventually went on the books in ten states in 1918: "The giving or receiving of the body for sexual intercourse for hire, or the giving or receiving of the body for indiscriminate intercourse without hire" (35-36). This definition retains the ambiguity to prosecute any form of sex outside of wedlock regardless of financial incentives while simultaneously adding gender ambiguity to the definition. Woolson claims the lack of gender specificity is based on the growing acknowledgment that both prostitute and customer are "equally guilty," but I think that it might also have to do with the increasing public visibility of and anxiety about homosexuality and male prostitution. In Guy Chauncey's *Gay New York*, he documents how homosexuality emerged as a perceptible social problem during World War I (141-149). With the suppression of female prostitution and the massive influx of military men into urban areas, social purity

woman who participated in "any form of sexual behavior that violated the moral imperatives of civilized morality" (Connelly 18). The very haziness of white slavery and prostitution helped to magnify their threat while making representations of them "an elastic cultural resource for a range of political agendas" (Donovan 20). Indeed, Ruth Rosen and Mark Connelly both separately suggest in their influential books on Progressive-Era prostitution that the cultural fixation on white slavery was attributable to its status as a "master symbol" that embodied all the anxieties of a nation in profound transition, due to rapidly increasing immigration, urbanization, industrialization, commercialization, and corporate combination.[175] Prostitution, then, became an outlet for expressing many disparate fears, from xenophobia to apprehensions about the immorality of city life to concerns about the formation of trusts.[176]

While antiprostitution rhetoric took up a large array of cultural projects and fears, there were some discernible overlaps in terms. The most commonly-held assumption was that prostitutes were (usually white) women, a myopia that reflects both a rigorously masculinist heterosexual culture and the emergence of women as the symbolic standard-bearers of Progressive hopes and anxieties for modern society. Secondly, prostitution's status not just

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agents began to worry about the new "perversion showing itself in the absence of girls" among soldiers and sailors (quoted in Chauncey 143).

175 See Rosen's *The Lost Sisterhood: Prostitution in America, 1900-1918* (Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1982) and Connelly's *The Response to Prostitution in the Progressive Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980). Judith Walkowitz makes a similar argument about prostitutes in *City of Dreadful Delight* (1988): "As symbols of conspicuous display or of lower-class and sexual disorder, they occupied a multivalent symbolic position in this imaginary landscape" (21).

176 To elaborate a couple of the conflicting anxieties that motivated representations of prostitution, Connelly points out that literature depicted a "new urban wilderness" in the Progressive era of which white slavery was a key part (118). He discusses how prostitution narratives that feature abduction by often foreign or alien operatives reenact the Indian captivity narratives of early America, with immigrants replacing the natives and the city replacing the wilderness (117-118). Simultaneously, prostitution was depicted as horrible because of its fully corporatized and rationalized structure, which commercialized the most private aspects of life and put them under the control of an omnipresent "vice trust," responding to the trend of economic combination (Kiere 6-10).

The Social Evil, but also The *Social* Evil demonstrates a new understanding of it as a structural problem that can only be addressed through systemic changes (as opposed to, for instance, a problem of personal morality that can be solved by the reformation of individual prostitutes). Lastly, most reformers believed that the direst systemic changes needed were educational and/or economic in nature. The predominantly structuralist and economic approaches to prostitution in the Progressive era mark the obvious overlaps with and influences of socialist theory. [177]

"No great wrong has ever arisen more clearly to the social consciousness of a generation," famous settlement worker Jane Addams proclaimed, "than has that of *commercialized* vice in the consciousness of ours" (my emphasis, *A New Conscience* 97). Indeed, much of the uproar over prostitution was attributable to the perception that it had become an organized business. [178] Vice commissions focused on the "*traffic* in women for immoral purposes" investigating what they believed to be a "vice *trust*," and legislators enacted reforms that were aimed at destroying the *economy* of prostitution (rather than, say, improving the lives of prostitutes).[179] Further, as a preventative measure to keep underpaid female workers from entering the profession, minimum wage laws for women were enacted in seventeen states in the wake of the white slavery scare, showing how the economic explanations for prostitution were

177 Pamela Haag remarks upon the White Slavery Scare as a time in which socialist ideas and rhetoric became curiously mainstream: "Perhaps the circumscribed critique of white slavery as a sexual violation in the second decade of the twentieth century precisely permitted a critique of 'human waste' otherwise not leveled with such conceptual abandon by those averse to socialist ideology" (69). Of course, as she points out, the popular critique was limited to female prostitutes and did not extend to humanity in general.

178 E.g., in Roe: "The traffic in women slaves, in one form or another, is older than Babylon, but it has remained for the present age to see it crystallized into a well-defined business…This old enemy in its new form teaches us many lessons" (*Panders* 216).

179 These phrases are taken from the Congressional Commission's 1909 report, "Importing Women for Immoral Purposes," which is reprinted at the end of *The House of Bondage*, pp. 468-480.

in fact institutionalized (Connelly 16). As historian Mara Kiere astutely observes, "The commercial critique was not the only language that American reformers used to describe urban vice, but during the Progressive era, their economic interpretation served as the unifying discourse … for interpreting urban prostitution that superseded their more superficial, stylistic differences" (6).

Kiere's observations lead her so far as to conclude that anti-monopolism is the 'real,' progressive political agenda behind what might otherwise seem like a conservative, Puritanical movement.[180] In doing so, she trivializes sexuality and ignores its high cultural and political stakes in antiprostitution campaigns. Furthermore, she overlooks why an economic critique was mediated through prostitution in the first place—because, as Lippmann says, people do not have to "force an interest." People do not have to "force an interest" because, unlike the issue of trusts, it is a "problem…close indeed to the dynamics our own natures," read: it is sexual.[181] Lippmann's generous explanation of the public interest in sexual matters reflects a growing assumption that sexuality was an intrinsic, foundational part of one's identity that precedes

180 By attempting to "recenter the white slavery scare within the mainstream of American reform" rather than seeing it as a "politically ineffectual" and "hysterical expression of middle-class fears," she suggests that sexuality is incidental and "rhetorically peripheral," merely a vehicle for serious, Progressive anti-monopolism reform (21). That is, she must dismiss sexuality as a primary concern or a legitimate political concern in order to reestablish the significance of antiprostitution campaigns. However, it does not seem accidental that the sexual is the realm in which economic injustice becomes publically visible or that prostitution was a metaphor for modern business *and* modern marriage or that legislation that targeted commercialized vice corresponded with the first nation-wide, congressionally-endorsed campaign for sex education.

181 In our "sex-phobic and sex-obsessed" culture, politicians' sexual scandals often receive more attention than their policy decisions and sexual matters like abortion occupy a magnified position in national politics, distracting from economic and other policies. As Michael Warner notes, "policy publics seem to have no way of recognizing sex as ordinary or as diverse," leaving "national politics pious and disingenuous about sex" in ways that inform and obstruct policy (18, 24). Sexual issues seem to both obscure and mediate other political issues. In terms of obstruction, Warner with Lauren Berlant argue that hegemonic national formations of compulsory heterosexuality construct "intimate life" as "the endlessly cited *elsewhere* of political public discourse, a promised haven that distracts citizens from the unequal conditions of their political and economic lives" (553).

various extrinsic economic institutions. Instead of offering a social critique of a "sex-phobic and sex-obsessed" culture, Lippmann presumes that sex has an ahistorical, primordial appeal. However, the point is: this economic critique is not separable from how it was enabled, mediated, and circumscribed by discourses about (female) sexuality. Accordingly, the "economic" explanation of prostitution popularized by socialists was widely accepted not primarily out of a budding awareness of class struggle or capitalist injustice but precisely because it reinforced dominant cultural scripts about gender and sexuality.

Connelly refers to the widely-accepted economic explanation of prostitution provided by *HB* as the "wages-and-sin" theory, meaning that low wages for men force them to forgo marriage and even lower wages for women force them to sin in order to survive.[182] For Connelly, Rosen, and Donovan the "wages-and-sin" theory of prostitution validates dominant Victorian ideals of women while expressing reactionary anxieties about women's changing role in the modern industrial world.[183] Similarly, Laura Hapke's study of Progressive-era white slavery literature focuses on how prostitutes posed a "threat to American imagination" because they "called into question two cherished period ideas: that woman had a higher moral sense than man and that she was innately chaste" (13). According to Hapke, claims that women were driven into prostitution by economic need or enslaved for the sake of profits provided a way to

182 Besides being endorsed by writers such as Addams, Goldman, and Bell, the power of the wages-and-sin theory might be seen in that the most prolific author of antiprostitution literature, Clifford Roe, wrote a novel—*The Girl Who Disappeared* (1916)—that systematically debunks Kauffman's ideas. For instance, Roe includes a scene in which his protagonist Jane chastises a sporting girl in the department store where she works for using her slight income as an excuse for her misdeeds. Roe uses this dialogue to contradict the wages-and-sin theory that Kauffman helped popularize by insisting that women "can live decently even with that [low] salary" and have a moral responsibility to avoid "wrong doing" even if they are facing penury (115).

183 There is evidence that Kauffman himself saw the limitations of his economic explanation of prostitution since he went on to publish a book of short stories, *The Girl that Goes Wrong* (1911), which considered multiple (especially psychological) motivations and causes of the social evil (including such stories as "The Girl that was Bad," "The Girl that Wanted Ermine," "The Girl that Studied Art," "The Girl that was Romantic," etc).

"sanitize" the prostitute, and Kauffman was one of the major offenders since he "saw the prostitute as a worker in an underworld sweatshop, a child-woman coerced into the trade by white slavers or economic need…[turning] the prostitute into a witness to social injustice rather than a carnally knowing participant in commercialized vice" (20).

Critical analyses of *HB*, then, have tended to focus either, in the mode of Kiere, on how the reactionary representation of women reflects anxieties about changing economic conditions or, in the mode of Hapke, on the other hand how its doctrinaire economic discourses reflect anxieties about changing constructions of gender and sexuality. I agree with many of the critiques presented by both modes of scholarship, but I disagree with their implicit privileging of either economic or gender analysis, reading Kauffman as "party line" on both counts. Written by a socialist immediately following the publication of his first book, the instructive *What is Socialism?* (1910),[184] it is especially tempting to approach *HB* looking for a static and essentialist socialist doctrine that prioritizes class and economics, assuming, as Mari Jo Buhle does, that, "Kauffman presents a class analysis of white slavery" in the novel (255). However, what interests me about *HB* is how it does not simply reinforce the status quo of either gender or socialism and challenges monolithic understandings of both. Specifically, I am interested in how it dramatizes and participates in ideological debates about gender and sexuality within the Party.

HB appears at a moment in which the relationships between sex and class, sexuality and the economy were up for grabs in mainstream and socialist thought. The issues of gender and sexuality were beginning to create rifts in the SP, with one current of thought posing socialism as the realization of traditional ideals (liberty, monogamy, civilization) and the other insisting

184 Louis Filler, for instance, encourages reading *What is Socialism?* and *HB* as companion texts, focusing on how the fiction "exemplified" the ideas of the nonfiction (290).

that changes in economic and social practices would have reciprocal effects, radically altering existing values. Though critics such as Hapke have seen *HB* as exemplifying the former more orthodox tendency, I approach it as a transitional text that negotiates between these two trends, anticipating if not wholly subscribing to the dialectical tenets of a New Morality. New Morality, instead of enshrining middle-class domestic ideals as the ends of socialism, challenged bourgeois conventions by calling for economic, sexual, and artistic freedom, especially for women. Furthermore, dialectical socialists posed the practice of such freedoms as a means for social transformation, rejecting the hierarchical privileging of class and class struggle. In view of this latter position, socialists' participation in the antiprostitution campaign and the birth control movement after it—both of which were characterized by coalition politics with a broad base of support from the general public—can be seen as not exclusively based on their desires to reach a wider audience and recruit people into the SP. Their participation also illustrates that on a practical level they understood sexual practices and institutions, along with their associated forms of oppression, which disproportionately affected working-class people, to bear a reciprocal relationship to existing economic practices and institutions. In other words, they understood at some level that working against sexual oppression was also fighting against capitalist oppression and vice versa.

Ultimately, then, I read Kauffman's novel as a site of contestation, looking to how the tensions in the text indicate productive confusions wherein the relationship between sexual and economic categories is actively being negotiated. *The House of Bondage* is a transitional text that marks a transitional moment in the SP between orthodox and dialectical orientations. These differing theoretical understandings of socialism also have ramifications on understandings of sexuality. The orthodox and traditional push to reinscribe the boundaries between sexuality and the economy—the effects of which are still visible today—reaffirmed the

dominant construction of (especially female) sexuality. The dialectical and progressive perspective that was emerging laid the groundwork for "sexual modernity" premised on female sexual emancipation and desire as well as for socialist thinking in which sexuality and the economy are not only inextricably connected, but also one does not have an a priori precedence of the other. Throughout this chapter, I map how these threads of ideological contestation play out in white slavery narratives written by members of the SP through their revision of both popular and socialist literary conventions and their ambivalent literary representations of prostitution, marriage, and socialist politics. Paying particular attention to *HB*, I trace the uneven figurative connections that socialist prostitution narratives draw among prostitutes, wives, and workers.

I begin this chapter by addressing how socialist prostitution narratives, in comparing white slaves and wives, expand the literal and figurative reach of prostitution to vivify the ways in which capitalism was invading the home, expressing the widespread perception that marriage, family life, and by extension the nation were influenced and threatened to an unprecedented degree by market forces. From there, I analyze socialists' difficulties in representing the prostitute as a worker, a link difficult not to make but equally difficult to sustain precisely because gender and sexuality interfere with their class analysis. I conclude by discussing how the conflicted and liminal representations of the prostitute self-consciously reveal the shortcomings of socialist pedagogy in ways that ultimately help to imagine women as subjects of political knowledge and sexual struggle as a legitimate avenue of anticapitalist activity.

B. UNDOING COURTSHIP CONVENTIONS: PROSTITUTION AND MARRIAGE

The cross-class socialist marriage plots discussed in Chapter One imply that there is a relationship between gender and class. However, that relationship is highly variable amongst the novels (that is, there is no consistent alignment between specific genders and classes across them), and the typical cross-class romances that they describe only rarely and fleetingly make explicit links between sexual and class-based oppression. They dramatize marriage primarily as a model of class cooperation, *not* as a microcosm of class struggle. Hence, it is in prostitution narratives (which often challenge the romantic conventions that underlie the courtship story genre)[185] that socialist novelists first saliently draw out the connections between workers and women, economic and sexual exploitation. However, these connections are made more directly and frequently through comparing wives and prostitutes rather than prostitutes and workers.

It is no accident that the most shocking scenes in *HB* are those in which business relations are starkly presented. In a brothel, Mary is unaware of how much Max was paid to recruit her or how much she earns per visit. When she becomes "self-employed" she must make a serious "effort to appraise her wares" and get advice from a hardened child-prostitute about the rates to charge her customers (376, 379). The "child" tells Mary between gulps of whiskey that "if you can hustle, you can land half a dozen" in a night and that she should "Ask 'em two dollars if they look that strong, or one if they're cheap guys—but don't ever take a cent less'n fifty" (379). As she notes "the gradual depreciation of her wares," Mary has difficulty making ends meet, and we see this price system in action: "the next dark figure that she stopped…answered her with sharp laughter. 'A two-spot?' he cackled. 'You have a few more

185 In challenging the conventions of the courtship stories, socialist prostitution novels also challenge the ideological underpinnings of their romantic symbolic cross-class marriages. They put into question the affirmation of the existing American cultural mores and political structures found in socialist marriage plots through their critique of marriage and consent.

thinks comin', old girl!'/ 'A dollar?' suggest Mary, tremulously./ 'I got just a half—an' you ain't worth a cent more'" (420-421). And then, after a brief stint in Chinatown, Mary finds herself in the most degrading situation yet in a disgusting house for sailors populated by subhuman, gender-ambiguous patrons and prostitutes. Her introduction to the house is a haggling between the brothel owner and the sailor who brought Mary there over the price of her body and soul. The owner, a quarrelsome and gigantic woman named Big Lou, offers "a five-spot" for her at first, but after extended negotiations they tentatively settle on seven-fifty with five down (440-441). It is not difficult to see that such bartering for a woman's body is distasteful, but what socialists were eager to prove was that it is precisely these immoral monetary considerations that govern and devalue all of our (sexual) relationships, even marriage.

Marriage was abstractly and concretely connected to antiprostitution efforts in a variety of ways. In terms of the former, many linked changing roles for women, modern society's undermining of the family and family values, and worries about increasing divorce rates to prostitution.[186] In terms of concrete sanitary consequences, the White Slavery Scare was informed by statistics that suggested sexually-transmitted diseases were running rampant, constructing prostitution itself as a disease ravaging the body politic and awakening fears of race suicide.[187] Amidst anxieties about racial degeneration, reproduction was explicitly

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186 Walter Lippmann discusses how the solutions to vice proved to be "well meaning but unmeaning" because they could not get past the prescribed ways of thinking about the issue, causing commissions to make hazy connections between divorce, marriage, and prostitution that would make "marriage difficult, divorce stringent, prostitution impossible," with the "leading idea…to confine the sex impulse within the marriage of healthy, intelligent, 'moral,' and monogamous couples" (133).

187 Besides prostitution narratives, a few socialists came out with novels that were primarily about sex hygiene and the horrors of VD (both gonorrhea and syphilis). Charlotte Perkins Gilman wrote *The Crux* (1911) in which a New Woman type character acts unselfishly in the interests of the race by painfully breaking off her engagement to her longtime love upon discovering that he has VD. (She is of course richly rewarded for this sacrifice by ultimately marrying a much more worthy man who is

identified as an obligation of citizenship,[188] and those venereal diseases associated with prostitution were explicitly referred to as "racial poisons" that threatened the "biological capital" of the nation.[189] Indeed, Ernest Bell, author of *Fighting the Traffic in Young Girls*, defines white slaves as "those women and girls who, if given a fair chance, would, in all probability, have been good wives and mothers and useful citizens" (quoted in Donovan 21).[190] The rhetorical conflation of wife and citizen depended upon posing monogamous, voluntary,

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predictably a doctor—symbolically, future mothers must unite with medical science to save the race.) Upton Sinclair wrote a novelization of Brieux's play *Damaged Goods* (1913) as well as *Sylvia* (1913) and *Sylvia's Marriage* (1914). *Damaged Goods* (about a young couple who judiciously decide to wait to marry until the groom is cured of VD) was so publically authorized that a dramatic performance of it was put on in the National Theater for the "most distinguished audience ever assembled in America," including "members of the Cabinet, members of both houses of Congress, members of the United States Supreme Court, representatives of the Diplomatic corps and others prominent in national life" (Brieux 6-7). The preface to the novelization features the various endorsements collected following this performance, from Rabbis to Reverends, foreign ministers to senators, justices to police commissioners, and even the surgeon general (7-9). The Sylvia novels are about a sexually-ignorant southern belle who marries the richest man in New York to please her family only to find out upon giving birth to a blind daughter that he has given them all VD. Coached by a socialist nurse, she goes on to rebel against the dictates of her class and culture by divorcing her husband and becoming a sex educator. Clearly, these texts are tied to the socialist eugenic imaginary as discussed in chapter two. If a normative sexuality and socialism are necessary for the progress of the race, then prostitution is the literal and figurative crux of racial decline.

188 For example, according to Theodore Roosevelt, a couple who refused to procreate was, "in effect a criminal against the race, and should be an object of contemptuous abhorrence by all healthy people." Prescribing gendered roles for citizens, he thought a male citizen's duty was to be "ready and able to fight at need and anxious to be fathers of families," while his female counterpart should, "recognize that the greatest thing for any woman is to be a good wife and mother" (quoted in Bederman 202).

189 See, for instance, the work of Prince A. Morrow, the president of the American Society for Sanitary and Moral Prophylaxis. In *Social Diseases and Marriage*, he writes, "If, as stated by a distinguished sociologist, 'man is the most precious capital of states and societies'…[then] no more important sociological problem can engage our attention than the relations with marriage of diseases which specifically affect those physiological functions through which life is perpetuated… Since the welfare of the human race is largely bound up in the healthy and productive capacity of the wife and mother, the sanitation of the marriage relation becomes the most essential condition of social preservation" (20).

190 Marriage, maternity, and citizenship are all conflated and contrasted with the unproductive, involuntary sexual relations of the prostitute. Due in part to the increased public discussion and acceptance of sexual attraction as a basis of a relationship, the shift also reflected and anticipated a dominant discourse that conflated marriage with voluntary consent and citizenship (Cott 150, 136). The wife's voluntary allegiance to a husband prefigures or reaffirms that relationship with the nation, a relationship based on a "free" contract that validates unequal powers in that the authority of the husband/nation supersedes that of the wife/citizen.

love-based marriage as the opposite of prostitution, which was seen as polygamous, coercive, and money-based (Cott 136-7). Since previously it was perfectly legal for a man to prostitute his wife, some of the first laws enacted to fight prostitution discounted marriage as a defense against white slavery charges precisely because such fraudulent marriages were a threat to citizenship.[191] Pamela Haag points out how the ramifications of antiprostitution crusades led to identifying "sexual commerce as a de facto nullification of consent" (67). That is, most of the legal discourse surrounding prostitution assumed that all prostitutes were essentially white slaves because economic considerations were fundamentally coercive.

Given these contexts, it is easy to see why the public was drawn to socialists' economic explanations of prostitution, though they were not eager to extend such materialist analysis into other social and personal arenas. For socialists, then, who repeatedly "drew the analogy suggested by Engels, that marriage and prostitution mirrored the system of private property," antiprostitution campaigns were as much about critiquing modern marriage as they were white slavery (Buhle 254). Given the stubborn criticism of socialism as a "home breaker" fundamentally at odds with traditional family life, socialists, in lieu of the horrors of white slavery, could convincingly turn those accusations on their head. For orthodox members of the SP, propaganda efforts depended upon being able to present prostitution and the subversion of the traditional family as symptoms of capitalism while simultaneously posing socialism as a means to finally achieve the ideal of the healthful, monogamic couple. Much socialist propaganda took the White Slavery Scare as an opportunity to recast socialism as a "home

191 See Roe's "Need of New Laws" chapter in *Panders and their White Slaves* (144 - 157): Previously, due to slack laws, marriage was an easy defense against being prosecuted as a white slave holder. It was not illegal to put your wife in a brothel, regardless of her age, so pimps could marry fourteen-year-old girls and keep them in lawful bondage. Men would also wed women for the sake of bringing them across state lines. Hence, Roe describes how one of the first legal interventions that legislators made was to ensure that marriage was not a viable defense against white slavery charges (157).

maker." In doing so, they reaffirmed the dominant "civilized morality," but projected it as something yet to be achieved.

HB definitely contributes to the socialist critique of commercial marriage, taking advantage of the emerging public sentiment that "put love and money on opposite sides of the street" (Cott 150). However, Kauffman's overall representation of marriage is a departure from the work of other socialist novelists in that he imagines it primarily as a site of economic and sexual oppression, not as a means for overcoming them. In other words, the novel manifests a crisis in picturing socialist futures in which marriage serves to identify the class and economic struggles in the present society but cannot model potential post-revolutionary societies.

Many critics have seen *HB* as the paradigmatic example of the white slavery genre because it was the most popular, but it departs from the generic prescriptions in a few salient particulars which contribute to its critique of modern marriage. In the typical white slave plotline, an innocent native-born Anglo-Saxon girl from the country is abducted from her idyllic home and forced into a brothel where she quickly dies or is rescued by her parents or future husband (Connelly 115). By contrast, in *HB* there is no hope of escaping the "house of bondage" by death, a return home, or marriage. Whereas the usual white slave narrative ends by reestablishing the social order that has been violated, in *HB* there is no relief from the monstrous order that makes slaves of us all.

To offer a telling foil, Clifford Roe's writings include many a happy ending for prostitutes. In *Panders and Their White Slaves* (1910), practically all the stories he tells are success stories: the white slaves are freed, vindicated, and returned to their loving parents who led the search for them. Even a convicted pander more often than not "promised then and there to abandon the loathsome business in vice, and is to this day living a decent and upright life"

(25).[192] Roe's novel, *The Girl Who Disappeared*, ends with his protagonist Jane marrying the customer who rescued her from the brothel, redeeming them both. Since Jane's rescue heralded both their escapes from sexual commerce, their union symbolizes the opposite: a companionate marriage in which they will both fight together towards the moral purification of the nation. Following the pattern of "happy" white slave tracts, Roe's many victims return to old or begin new families, better securing once-threatened domestic arrangements.[193]

By contrast, the family is in no way a refuge or escape from the economic millhouse and does not encourage good values in *HB*. Instead, Mary grows up in rural Pennsylvania in an impoverished and abusive environment, raised by parents who have been conditioned by narrow-minded drudgery. The typical white slave plotline, including Roe's, reaffirms the family as the site of salvation from threatening market forces and calls for a return to a golden age of American virtue epitomized by small-town life. *HB* presents such a "return" as both impossible (since Mary's parents reject her as a 'bad woman') and undesirable (since it was a torturous environment in the first place). Far from functioning as a haven from socioeconomic injustice, Mary's home life instead replicates in miniature the troubling class relations in society as whole. Mary experiences the cruelty of the "Denbigh's domestic economy," associating the home with a place of "filial servitude" and "the drudgery of childhood" (5-10).

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192 For other examples of Roe's panders and prostitutes who are supported by their families and go on to lead wholesome, moral lives, see pages 44-45, 54, 106-107, and 175.

193 For other examples of typical white slave tracts, see Virginia Brooks' *Little Lost Sister* (Chicago: Gazzolo and Ricksen, 1914) and *My Battles with Vice* (New York: Macauley, 1915); Elizabeth Goodnow's *The Market for Souls* (New York: Mitchell Kennerly, 1912); Edward O. Janney's *The White Slave Traffic in America* (Baltimore: Lord Baltimore Press, 1911); Guy Phelps' *Ethel Vale the White Slave* (Chicago: Christian Witness, 1910); and Jane Turner Zimmerman's *Chicago's Black Traffic in White Girls* (Chicago: Chicago Rescue Mission, 1910).

Pointedly departing from the prescriptions of the genre, *HB* makes saving the prostitute impossible and certainly does not allow her to either go home or be married.[194] To write such endings would be to reestablish and reaffirm the existing social order that has been temporarily undermined by the white slavery plot, and therefore to imply that the commercial invasion of the home is a transient affliction rather than a permanent feature of our immoral economic system.

While *HB* does not allow any of its prostitutes to be married, it does prominently feature two marriage plots. At first it may seem as though Kauffman is upholding the rhetoric that juxtaposes marriage with prostitution, by contrasting a despicable upper-class commercial wedding (between Wesley and Marian) with a praiseworthy working-class "union" (between Hermann and Katie), but upon closer examination, the latter fails to offer a viable alternative to patriarchal bourgeois marriage.

Kauffman expresses obvious disdain for the romance between Marian Lennox, the daughter of a rich "reformer," and Wesley Dyker, a corrupt magistrate, exhibiting strong doubts that love between members of the upper class can exist. When they are initially introduced as a couple, the narrator explains that, "whatever his relation with other members of her sex," Dyker was "quite as much in love with [Marian] as he could be with anybody" (133). Since it is emphasized that he has no appreciation of her opinion or intellect, it is clear that his esteem for her resides mainly in "realizing the power of her father's fortune and the beauty of

194 Kauffman's reluctance to "save" the prostitute also rejects the belief that the individual and the salvaging or salvager of particular bodies and souls are important. This structuralist view is expressed in the novel through the rich settlement worker, Marian (who is the character most affected—in both senses of the term—by literature and sentiment): "She had the partial vision that makes the martyr: a vision that shows just enough of an evil to confirm the necessity of action and not enough to prove how little individual action individually directed can be worth" (205). Mary herself comes to such a conclusion by the end when she finally "saw much of the truth": "New York itself, with all its women-slaves and men-slaves must be but an illustration of what the other cities of the world are and have been. No rescue of a slave could put an end to slavery. Something was wrong" (465).

the girl herself" (133). Elsewhere the narrator confides that, "For want of a better term, it may be repeated that he was in love with Marian," but "Moreover, he wished the assistance that an early marriage with the daughter of a wealthy department-store owner would give him in the coming campaign" (201).

Marian's "love" is similarly put into question. She, in line with many a female literary character of the turn of the century, is discounted for being too influenced by romantic myths and for being too theatrical; her speeches to her lover "reminded her of some speech she had once heard in a play," and she resists marrying him at first because though "she was in love with Wesley Dyker…she was more in love with renunciation" (135). Kauffman not only doubts the authenticity of their love, but also uses their romance to illustrate the connection between marriage and private property. Dyker's profession to Marian includes a demand: "I love you so much, Marian, that I am jealous of any work that would take you from me; I want so much of your love that I can spare none of it—none even for the poor and suffering" (134). Marian validates his possessiveness by secretly craving that type of love and by having her love for him catalyzed by the fear of his "possessing" other women, that is, prostitutes (135, 370). At their wedding, Mary bitterly laments, " 'I guess I paid for the bride's bouquet' " (427), evoking the critique of old justifications of prostitution as a necessary evil in which working-class women are often sacrificed for the sake of upper. Yet, the intentional visual and sonic resonances between "Mary" and "Marian" also suggest the latter's marriage is just an upper-class form of prostitution.

It might seem at first as though Katie and Herman's marriage is an antidote to both prostitution and commercial marriage. Indeed, the heroic descriptions of the healthy, virtuous working-class match evoke the ideal romances of the socialist novels I address in previous chapters. Their love is portrayed as comparatively sincere, and their union is sanctified with

religious imagery: Hermann's head is figuratively encircled by a "halo" of light while Katie is compared to a "Madonna" in whose face "shone the light of the life-force" (352-353). However, there are many details surrounding their marriage that question it as a model, details that undermine any marriage as a potential alternative to economic and sexual exploitation. Ultimately, the marriage plot fails to offer a satisfactory conclusion or relief from the prostitution narrative since Katie and Hermann's marriage seems marked by ambivalence rather than an unspotted happiness. This departure from presenting marriage as a trope for imagining socialist futures signals the transitional nature of Kauffman's text, which tentatively points towards the insufficiency of imagining a future constrained by civilized morality, and the need for a new morality that will transform sexuo-economic relations.

While Katie and Hermann's marriage is not presented as a contemptuously commercial affair, it still evokes the imagery of masculine domination. Their proposal scene is depicted as a physical "struggle." It begins with the "world slipping from beneath her feet" as "she twisted in his arms and got free," and ends when "his arms recaptured her, and this time held her fast" because, "she swayed and yielded" (352-3). Marriage means that Katie is "no longer set and self-reliant," and she designates her task as wife as being "all women" for Hermann and "all [that he] want(s)" (353).

Besides this strange take on the typical swooning embrace of lovers, Kauffman explicitly points out the asymmetrical power that Hermann must exert over Katie in order to bring their marriage about. Initially Katie establishes "a job that'll pay me six dollars a week" as a prerequisite to their union since she is horrified by the thought of economic dependence (91). When Katie eventually acquiesces to Hermann's proposal, it corresponds with her being fired from a job and facing destitution after a long struggle with low wages and poverty. Hermann, on the other hand, has just been awarded management of a store in exchange for dropping

attempted murder charges against a rich man's lackey. Far from being portrayed as an ideal egalitarian match, Kauffman imagines her submitting to his proposal at her moment of greatest emotional and economic vulnerability whereas Hermann has been promoted to a stable and more remunerative position: "He had found her in her moment of weakness when he had come to her in his hour of strength renewed" (352). The chapter concludes with a bit of legal discourse: "The case against Mirka was then and there dismissed, and the High Court handed down a final decision in re Hoffmann vs. Flanagan" (354). While no doubt intended to be humorous, the legal terminology[195] on the one hand draws attention to Hermann's complicity in the corrupt system that he has managed to exploit for personal gain and on the other, poses their union as a court battle in which Katie and Hermann are on opposing sides. Hermann implicitly is the winning party as Katie relinquishes her demand for economic independence. When Mary later runs into Katie outside Marian's wedding (a damning event to be attending), Kauffman refers to Katie as "shackled" by her new responsibilities as a wife, evoking the highly-charged language of slavery that imbues the prostitution narrative.

Noting how "free labor" is integral to the founding of the American republic, Carole Pateman identifies marriage as being essentially a labor contract, which (as with "free labor") is assumed to be voluntary despite the structural and socioeconomic inequalities that exist between the contracting parties. Indeed, the minimum wage laws for women and children that antiprostitution campaigns helped implement are proof of how the public response to prostitution ultimately challenged the freeness of free labor.[196] Both the Marian-Dyker and

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195 In another disturbing parallel, Marian and Dyker's relationship is almost always described in terms of legal discourse. Dyker also ends up winning their "case," showing how sexual inequalities are institutionalized in the law.

196 See Alice Kessler-Harris's chapter in *Gender, Class, Race, and Reform in the Progressive Era* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1991), "Law and a Living: the Gendered Content of 'Free Labor'" (87-109). Kessler-Harris argues that the widely-adopted and popularly-supported

Katie-Hermann marriages are depicted as labor contracts. Drawing attention to the sexual contract as an employment contract, Marian's bargain with Dyker assumes that he will have exclusive possession of her labor since she must give up her "work" for him, and Katie explicitly identifies her chief qualification to be Hermann's wife as knowing "how to work" as if he has become the owner of her labor (353).

It should also be noted that both Marian's and Katie's marriage contracts are formed as their solidarity with other women dissolves, substituting private interests for collective struggles. Marian must leave her fellow settlement workers and clients, relinquishing her dream to help "the girls—hundreds and hundreds of them—[that] are every week going into lives of shame and death," in order to marry Wesley (205). More concretely, Marian's relationship with Mary is compromised by her romantic involvement with Wesley since Mary unwittingly tells her about his patronizing a brothel in a conversation intended to point out his heroism in rescuing her. Instead of receiving aid and education from the settlement, Mary remains haunted by the "memory of [Marian's] hand withheld" (341). Marian's abandonment of gender solidarity is further dramatized by how Mary's image (which threatens to check her selfish desires) must be suppressed and her "word" falsified in order for Marian's marriage to occur.[197] Instead, Marian practically demands that Wesley exploit and marginalize Mary to secure their marriage.

Progressive minimum wage laws for women revealed how sexual "difference remains embedded in the wage," but also "kept alive the possibility that all workers deserved state protection" (105).

197 Kauffman notes how Marian's "words had brought Mary vividly before her and, for a minute, she well-nigh forgot her own distress in the misery of that figure" (365). This opportunity for effacement of one's self through communion with another's suffering is a reoccurring trope in *HB*. Inevitably, however, the spell is broken by property considerations. Even Mary's abductor, Max, is visibly shaken when they meet again in the street, but his sympathy quickly evaporates at "the thought of [Mary's] appeal for [financial] assistance" (406).

While Katie's case is not nearly as extreme, her marriage contract is still explicitly forged at the moment in which her roommate Carrie has left their home, discouraged by her participation in a losing strike, to become a streetwalker. Katie arrives at her tenement, finding it a "barren home," and "there fell such a blow that shook to its foundations the structure of hope which she had so briefly reared" (349). In the only use of the word in the whole novel, Katie is lamenting Carrie as a "lost *comrade*" for whom she "felt too deeply" to consider that "which touched her own interest," when Hermann arrives to propose (350). Operating for a short time as a women's collective, Katie's apartment was a space for Carrie, Katie, and Mary to forge alliances to combat the socioeconomic inequalities they faced daily as female workers. While Mary is sacrificed body and soul for the sake of Marian's marriage, Carrie more or less voluntarily sacrifices herself out of ultimate solidarity, seeing prostitution as the only way to make ends meet while not betraying her fellow shirtwaist factory strikers who lost the fight. By contrast, Katie's marriage leaves her at odds with the other women. This is dramatized through Katie and Mary's last meeting where Katie realizes that "her own condition had altered, and Mary's had evidently again fallen," leaving Katie to "[look at Mary] through an alien atmosphere, and her gaze was distant…She did not know how to suggest any assistance, did not even believe that it was desired" (428-9). Katie, once a young radical, has become conservative in her married life. Once "knowing," marriage has made her innocent of her former knowledge.

Kauffman's ambivalence towards marriage in *HB* graduates into a full-fledged critique in the remaining books of the series of which it is a part. Kauffman identifies *HB* as the first of a "cycle" of four novels that also includes *The Sentence of Silence* (1912), *Running Sands* (1913), and *The Spider's Web* (1913). With each volume, Kauffman becomes more sexually explicit (even including characters like Judith and Muriel who take pleasure in sex) while

simultaneously making the connections between sexual and class struggle more explicit until women and workers are unmistakably aligned.

The Sentence of Silence features Dan Barnes, a tragically conventional man who has multiple affairs with servants, prostitutes, mistresses, and married women, contracts venereal disease, and then tries to redeem himself by marrying his virtuous childhood sweetheart only to find that she also engaged in premarital sex. If Kauffman's critique of modern marriage is somewhat cautious in *HB*, he goes out of his way to explicitly and exhaustively announce it in *The Sentence of Silence*. We are treated to no happy marriages and have several socialist mouthpieces who persistently speak out against the matrimonial institution, including Dan's coworker Gideon, Gideon's adopted daughter Madge, and Dan's childhood sweetheart Judith.[198] Dan's economic fortunes are intimately intertwined with his sexual encounters, but when he finally decides to stop speculating and "invest" in a good woman, he realizes that he has misunderstood the terms of the deal. Kauffman stresses Dan's upbringing as the source of his ignorant views and bad behavior, emphasizing education even more than economics as a determining circumstance in our lives.[199] This creates a more optimistic outlook than in *HB*, since the novel suggests that "the world isn't bad; it's only blind," and its blindness is curable (300). However, in the end, Dan remains sadly blind despite what should have been a

198 E.g. Madge answers a desperate proposal from one of Dan's friends with "I believe in real marriage, but [not] in the imitation that most people accept. I don't believe that the wife should be the husband's property…I ought never to marry in the conventional way, if only as matter of personal protest against the system" (231-2). Judith claims, "the whole trouble with modern marriage" is "the man thinks that the woman must have been his property from her birth and must stay so till her death" (332), and Gideon gives a scathing indictment of "the whole institution of marriage" at Dan's wedding (409).

199 Kauffman is careful to insist that the two are still very much connected—in the preface, for instance, he writes that the sex-question, "is an educational question because our modern attitude toward marriage, an economic attitude, has created a convention of silence that fits our children for disaster." Here, he conflates the sex-question with marriage and asserts an unclear correspondence between our economic attitude toward the latter and the lack of candid sex education for our children.

comprehensive education. Love has cured him of his desire for capitalist accumulation, but not of his desire to be the sole proprietor of "pure" woman—in essence, he has failed to see how the economic and sexual are related.

Prefaced by wedding vows copied from *The Book of Common Prayer*, Kauffman's next novel, *Running Sands*, uses a truly intricate and implausible plot to test the ethical limits of the marriage contract. Jim Stainton,[200] an upright if rugged miner who has recently come into a fortune in gold, marries Muriel, his one-time sweetheart's poor, orphaned daughter who is over thirty years his junior. Their age difference is the obvious, objectionable gap that dramatizes the asymmetrical class and gender relations that characterize their union. Only Muriel's money-grubbing guardians, who are eager to have her off their hands, have no reservations about the match (showing how money facilitates sins against nature in modern society). Particularly targeting compulsory maternity in which a husband can exploit his wife's body for the production of offspring, *Running Sands* takes aim at all kinds of "coercion," including money, custom, religion, law, and even our hormones![201] The men's ongoing discussion of divorce, marriage, and birthrates among countries as they travel abroad provides the political context for the novel, with the off-putting French social hygienist, Dr. Boussingault, as the ideological authority. Boussingault takes an anti-eugenics stance, claiming that it is society that makes its

200 His surname, *Stain*-ton, is telling: his marriage is the stain on an otherwise spotless life.
201 When Stainton comes for the answer to his suit, though he had refrained from physical seduction during the whole courtship, "passion mastered him" temporarily when he faces her indecision (113). Muriel admits that she is unsure if she loves him, but her doubts evaporate, and she agrees to the wedding when he kisses her. Kauffman's violent, overpowering description of the scene suggests how Jim's physical appeal was ultimately coercive, causing the young girl to mistake her awakened sexual impulse for love (very similar to Mary's situation in *HB*): "She was seized by him. She was crushed to him; she was held tight in his strong arms. She was hurt, and, as she was hurt, their lips met. The miracle oh, she was sure now that this was the miracle happened. Something new clutched at her throat. Something new, wonderfully, terrifyingly, deliciously new, gripped at her heart and set her whole body athrill and trembling. The blood pounded in her temples. She tried to look at him, but a violet mist covered her eyes and hid him" (114). Later, in the story, she realizes that she "was still only a young animal that had been caught in the marriage trap" (336).

people unfit,[202] but more importantly, he is against all forms of oppression: "Disease, Ignorance, Poverty, Wage-slavery, Child-slavery, Lust-slavery, Marriage-slavery!" (196). Further, he continually links production and reproduction, class and sexual emancipation: "You cannot breed a free race until you have given to the possible mothers of it freedom of choice; and you cannot breed a healthy race until you have given to papa and mamma and baby proper food and surroundings until you have given the man working the full pay for his toil" (195).

In the end, Muriel exercises what Boussingault refers to as her "inalienable right to refuse motherhood" and gets an abortion, rebelling against the husband who she now realizes appreciated her only as a possession by taking back control of the 'means of production.' In a pattern typical to Kauffman's novels, then, Muriel "finds herself" and "obtains vision" when she recognizes her life is a waste but she cannot escape it. Muriel (disturbingly) aligns herself metaphorically with the fetus she has just aborted: "I have a baby, a little dead baby. It will never leave me: it's the little ghost-baby of the woman I never had a chance to be" (316-317).

In Kauffman's opus, the working out of the dialectical perspective anticipated in *HB* is most fully realized in the final novel of his "cycle," *The Spider's Web* (1913). Unlike in *The Sentence of Silence* and *Running Sands*, marriage and romance is only a subplot for this thorny political epic. However, it still offers the most dramatic example of the intersection between sexual and economic oppression. Indeed, the climactic, ultimate personal and social epiphany of the novel's protagonist, lawyer and would-be reform politician Luke Haber, happens just as he is about to rape his former fiancée, Betty Forbes. Betty is the daughter of a man in whose factory Luke is a part-owner. The setting of the near-rape, in the "upper offices" of the factory

202 Boussingault challenges Stainton's endorsement of the regulation of marriage and reproduction with, "You should change the economic conditions that breed your defective as a refuse-heap breeds flies, but instead you propose to spend time and money to try to segregate defectives as fast as you manufacture them" (194).

while a strike is raging outside, provides an obvious connection between class and sexual violence. After Betty fails to reciprocate his aggressive sexual advances, Luke finds "he could think of nothing. He could realize only that he was again to be robbed," associating Betty's withholding of her body to his workers' withholding of their labor (388). While Luke's initial response to the situation is an "ungovernable fury" that leads him to clutch her hair and throat, forcing her over a table until she "was wholly in his power...[and] helpless because her captor's was the strongest body," the moment in which he recognizes "his frightful sense of Power" is the "instant the madness fell from him" (389). Kauffman describes this epiphany as a "revolution" and a "new birth," again linking the sexual and political. Luke's understanding is still affective and abstract, simultaneously the "glory of individuality" and the "holiness of humanity," suggesting that in realizing his true self, he must also come to acknowledge and respect the "potential in his fellow creatures" (390). Later, however, Luke's character is able to explicitly analyze the parallels between his desire to rape Betty and to violently suppress the strike. Back in the offices, he simultaneously notices a wire hairpin on the floor that must have fallen from Betty's head in their struggle and "a draggled necktie that had been torn from the throat of some striker" down on the street (395). As "his gaze wander[s] from one object to the other and back again," he finally realizes "what he had done to these men was what he had tried to do to Betty, not in the riot only, but in accepting the position that society had offered him in relation to them" as a self-interested owner-employer and determines to "give up everything that was easy and comfortable…[to] join the oppressed" (395-399).

Of course (following the pattern of the cycle), Luke's epiphany happens too late since he is immediately assassinated in the name of a powerful capitalist who he intended to prosecute, and he dies singing the I.W.W. anthem "Hallelujah, I'm a bum!" (405). In each of Kauffman's novels, then, individual revelations have no power over the ultimate wastefulness of the

industrial system. While Kauffman clearly believes in sexual struggle as a location for catalyzing critical consciousness, he also repeatedly dismisses personal interventions as a means for wide-scale social transformation. The personal allows his characters to "see entire" or "see truth" or "see the whole" but not act upon it. Indeed, "finally comprehending" does nothing to change the immediate material conditions of any of his protagonists.[203]

It is obvious that, across these novels, Kauffman gets more and more overt about the connections between struggles for economic and gender equality, a relationship which he began to seriously question in *HB*. In doing so, he calls into question the limits of marriage as a means projecting political futures or transcending the economic present, but he makes his characters "impotent" to enact social change since they as of yet unable to imagine alternatives. Furthermore, in spite of the strong ties that Kauffman forges between class and sexual struggle in *HB*, this connection does not seem to hold in representations that do not foreground gender-based oppression. While wives can be compared to prostitutes and to workers, the novel is far more tentative about making the transitive leap: that is, to make the prostitute the privileged representative of the exploited working class.

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203 The fatalistic endings of Kauffman's stories emphasize the grave waste, but also evidence the drawbacks of his "starkly deterministic" perspective (Pittenger 233). Kauffman communicates his environmentalist argument by constant references to characters in terms of "types," "conditions," and "inevitable results." Economic and environmental determinism was SP party line in the Progressive era, a stance which many people have pointed out "This philosophy, so useful in propaganda, is becoming a burden in action" since "The feeling that a man is a creature and not a creator is disastrous as a personal creed when you come to act…You are likely to wait for something to determine you" (Lippmann 242). Upton Sinclair actually critiques determinism through sexuality in his 1911 novel *Love's Pilgrimage*. The main character, Thyrsis, is so naïve by the time he goes to college that a priest has to teach him what a prostitute is and does. Soon after, Thyrsis becomes disgusted with a schoolmate who uses his belief in "determinism" as a justification for gratifying all his sexual impulses, which he can easily sate by patronizing prostitutes. Sinclair registers a disdain for this interpretation of determinism when he recalls how "with entirely scientific and cold-blooded precision [the schoolmate] outlined to Thyrsis the means he took to avoid contracting disease. Thyrsis listened, feeling as he might have felt in a slaughter house; and when, returning to the deterministic hypothesis, he asked how it was that he had managed to escape this 'necessity,' he was told that it must be because he was of a weaker and less manly constitution" (26). Similarly, Jane Addams levels a critique of sexual determinism in *A New Conscience and an Ancient Evil* (1911), reminding her readers that "the instinct which the modern artists so often describe as 'uncontrollable,'" has in fact been an object of social control throughout human history (207).

C. THE PROSTITUTE IS (NOT) THE WORKER

If some socialists saw the White Slavery Scare as an opportunity to radicalize the public, others criticized the antiprostitution campaign as detracting from class struggle. One disgruntled party member proclaimed in a letter to the editor of a radical publication, "I would prefer to pass venereal disease on to my offspring than wage-slavery" (quoted in Buhle 272). Such resistance shows a hesitation to link economic and sexual oppression as well as a legitimate worry that the latter would inevitably subsume the former. Female workers had other reasons to be wary of prostitutes. For starters, they were already not-flatteringly associated with prostitutes in contemporary discourse, assumed to be sexually vulnerable and available.[204] Recruited as strike-breakers, prostitutes were often employed to perform roles directly antagonistic to other laborers on the ground (Tax 214). Furthermore, women strikers on the picket line were arrested as streetwalkers and the wives of labor leaders charged with prostitution, trumped-up allegations specifically designed to publically humiliate them[205] (Tax 42, 70). Hence, many socialist authors were less than sympathetic in their depictions of prostitutes.

In *Diary of a Shirtwaist Striker* (1910), Theresa Malkiel's narrator encounters prostitutes when she is taken to jail during the strike. Though she says at some point that it is "nothing

204 See for instance "Part II" of Katie Johnson's *Sisters in Sin* on "Working Girls", pp. 81-108.

205 The latter is a plot point in Ernest Poole's *The Harbor*. The famous labor leader who helps to organize a strike in New York's harbor has a resentful wife who is frequently arrested on account of irregular living arrangements. The novel implies that his wife and daughter must be persistently sacrificed for his political commitments (which they do not share).

but poor wages that drives a girl to the street," she is upset about being mistaken for or compared to a streetwalker when she goes on trial, implicitly valorizing the moral factory worker against the dissipated prostitute (20). In a more extreme example, another shirtwaist striker character, James Oppenheim's Rhona in *The Nine-Tenths* (1911), is forced to be bedmates with the lascivious prostitute Millie when she is incarcerated. Millie spends the nights whispering "poison" into Rhona's innocent ears, trying to convince Rhona to become a prostitute herself. Drawing attention to Rhona's ill pay, long hours, and "slave-work" that "would kill an ox," Millie suggests that she switch to her "business," from which she can "get clothes, the eats, and the soft spots," and "live like a lady" (276-8). Rhona is so horrified by her first night in the cell with Millie that she sees as worse than a night she spent hiding from an anti-Semitic Russian mob in "fear of death and mutilation" (277). However, she eventually gets used to the "filth" from prolonged exposure, and it is not until she is visited by one of the strike's organizers that she regains her "heroism" and "purity" (277-279). Remembering her "martyrdom" to "the struggle," she finds the strength to resist Millie's peer pressure to live an ignoble if easy life (279). While it is not so extreme, this dynamic is also visible in *HB*, since Katie is more or less morally superior to Carrie and Mary in the end. Despite being the most attractive and most sought after in the bunch, Katie manages to resist all advances and prefer poverty (and even death) to prostituting herself. Thus, the worker is distanced from the prostitute in order to establish her moral superiority. Some socialists, then, use their representation of the prostitute to critique antiprostitution advocates for their blindness to the labor movement and exploited industrial workers, taking to task a bourgeois morality that harped on the evils of white slavery but too often ignored the plight of wage slavery. This lack of class solidarity or the prostitute's tenuous relationship to the working-class is also apparent in *HB*.

Pamela Haag claims that, whereas most reformers saw commodification of sex rather than of labor in general as the trouble with prostitution, "Radicals saw white slavery as a problem rooted in the fiction of the (corporate) labor contract generally rather than in the differences inherent to women's bodies" (70). Haag's generalization here echoes the critical tendency to approach socialist texts looking for an orthodox socialist position, that is, a strict class analysis. If this were the case, the prostitute would simply serve another example of the exploited working class. However, a close examination of *HB* evidences such a keen awareness of the "differences inherent to women's bodies" that the text persistently frustrates any easy identification between workers and prostitutes.

The worker and prostitute are linked in the genealogy of "white slavery," which was once the preferred term for wage slavery.[206] The phrase's origins, then, reveals on the one hand how white slavery is premised on a critique of "free labor" and capitalism, and on the other how the term has a historical burden of meaning that does not allow for any uncomplicated or unproblematic rhetorical deployment of it. Further, while class remains a constant term in this genealogy, "gender, not race, was the most pronounced dichotomy" in

206 Although white slavery came to designate sexual oppression in the Progressive era, the expression "white slavery" actually arose in the early nineteenth-century American labor movement as synonymous with "wage slavery." Indeed, prior to the popularization of Marx, "white slavery" was the preferred term, appearing with much greater frequency than either "slavery of wages" or "wage slavery" in antebellum labor periodicals (Roediger 72). David Roediger points out that the term "white slavery" was favored, not out of solidarity with chattel slaves, but rather to "draw attention to the inappropriate oppression of white people" (68). Indeed, pro-slavery activists sometimes juxtaposed the starving Northern industrial worker with the well-provided-for slave to argue for the comparative benevolence of chattel slavery. See for instance, William John Grayson's "The Hireling and the Slave" (1855). However, precisely because the invocation of slavery was associated with blackness (and therefore otherness, dependence, and degradation), workers were apprehensive about the metaphor even as they evoked it. While the term first became widely used with reference to prostitution in 1880s Britain (Kiere 7-8), the shift was partially anticipated in America by transferring the label from the male artisan to the factory worker, who was often a (sexually-vulnerable) single woman or child—a shift reinforced by industrialists' tendency to justify their questionable labor practices as a form of benevolent paternalism (Roediger 69-70). Female factory workers in fact famously called themselves white slaves in picket-line chants and parades in the Lowell textile strikes of the 1830s (Laurie 86-87).

Progressive-era iteration of white slavery (Kiere 8). In an era that had a high stake in political "manhood" and presented radicals as molly-coddles, weaklings, and sexual degenerates,[207] it was difficult to sustain the metaphorical relationship between white slave and wage slave unproblematically.[208] Doing so revealed how the rhetorics of class were themselves gendered, surfacing a tension in the socialist construction of the normative (male) worker between his role as a vigorous, autonomous political agent and his feminized sense of oppression.

Even though American socialists were quick to take up Engels' analysis of marriage and prostitution as twin products of private property, they were more hesitant to adopt the radical connections that Engels makes between prostitution, marriage, and (wage) slavery. Engels asserts in *The Origins of Family, Private Property, and the State*, a book popular amongst U.S. socialists, that a wife only "differs from the ordinary courtesan in that she does not let out her body on piece-work as a wage-worker, but sells it once and for all into slavery" (134). Tellingly, in Ernest Untermann's Progressive-era translation of this work, which was commissioned and published by the most prolific socialist press in the U.S. (Charles H. Kerr & Co) for their Socialist Standards series, this same sentence reads: a wife "is distinguished from the courtisane only in that she does not offer her body for money by the hour *like a commodity*, but sells it into slavery once and for all" (86, my emphasis).[209] In other words, Untermann's

207 See the introduction to Kevin Murphy's *Political Manhood* (2008), pp. 1-10.

208 If it was difficult in the nineteenth-century labor movement for workers "not to compare themselves to slaves, almost unbearable to make such comparison, and impossible to sustain the metaphor" because of the dependence, degradation, *blackness*, and sexual exploitation associated with slavery in dominant discourse (Roediger 55, 85), Progressive-era socialists experienced a similar imaginative difficulty due to the dependence, degradation, *femininity*, and sexual exploitation popularly associated with white slavery.

209 The original German reads, "In beiden Fallen aber wird die Heirat bedingt durch die Klassenlage der Beteiligten und ist insofern stets Konvenienzehe. Diese Konvenienzehe schlägt in beiden Fällen oft genug um in krasseste Prostitution - manchmal beider Teile, weit gewöhnlicher der Frau, die sich von der gewöhnlichen Kurtisane nur dadurch unterscheidet, daß sie ihren Leib nicht als Lohnarbeiterin zur Stückarbeit vermietet, sondern ihn ein für allemal in die Sklaverei verkauft."

translation is subtly but significantly inaccurate—by revising "as a wage-worker" to read "like a commodity," the explicit relationship between prostitution and wage labor is suppressed and the prostitute is constructed first and foremost as a product.[210]

Laura Hapke asserts that, "the paradox of white slave fiction is that it acknowledged prostitution as a business while it denied that the supposedly enslaved women who engaged in it did a form of labor" (*Labor's Text* 159). In fact, there was a wide-scale public debate during the Progressive era as to whether the white slave was a laborer or a commodity (Haag 71-3). The federal government ultimately decided on the latter, assigning the regulation of prostitution to the Department of Commerce. In line with this, *HB* reinforces the idea that the prostitute is not paid for her labor (soliciting and performing sex acts), but for a product (her body) by refusing to depict prostitution as work. By contrast, the narrative painstakingly details the back-breaking work that Mary does as a house servant and Katie does as a department store clerk.[211] Ironically, given his critique of "an industrial system too fatuous to conserve [youth's] efficiency," Kauffman depicts Mary's and Katie's hard labor as comparatively salubrious to the effects of prostitution (166). Katie is always ruddy with good

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210 To give another example, in a pamphlet on "Free Love and Socialism," A.W. Ricker notes that, "Prostitution is increasing at an alarming rate," and provides a dizzying list of reasons: "It is increasing precisely because the wage system is increasing. Because the girl is in the factory when she ought to be in school. Because the woman can get more for her virtue than she can for her labor power. Because the working man cannot support a wife. Because the girl must become a wage earner, instead of a wife" (13). In this chain of circumstances, "the wage system" is clearly implicated but almost as an indirect cause of prostitution since a prostitute sells "her virtue" *rather than* "her labor power."

211 It might be argued that Mary's prostitution becomes more aligned with labor when she leaves the brothel for the street—then again, the work involved seems to be selling the "product" by soliciting and haggling with customers. As a streetwalker, Mary is depicted as starting a "new business" which requires her to "make an effort to appraise her wares" (376). This discussion evokes a startling socialist pamphlet written by Mary Marcy and R.B. Tobias, "Women as Sex Vendors," which argues that women's biological difference does make a significant class difference precisely because women always have their sex to sell when their labor power is insufficient to meet their material needs. Women as a whole are more conservative than men because they are in "a more fortunate biologic…and economic position," making them a class akin to "petty shop-keeper[s]" (Chicago: Charles Kerr & Co, 1918): 9, 12.

health though she is near starving. Mary, fresh out of treatment for an unnamed sexually-transmitted disease, gets work as a domestic for a short while by lying about her past. Surprisingly, she is not only "happy" in her position, but finds that "her health, if it did not improve, at least did not noticeably decline" (277). By contrast, a few weeks in the brothel have completely ravaged Mary's health and beauty. The sixteen year-old girl is shocked to compare herself to "the pair of healthy [wage-earning] girls" with whom she finds temporary refuge. Once a "lithe, strong-limbed, and firm-bodied" girl with "blue eyes, [a] red mouth…pink cheeks, and abundant russet hair," her reflection shows a horrifying transformation: "Lacking rouge, her cheeks, once so pink and firm, were pasty and pendant; her lips hung loose, her blue eyes were dull and blurred; even her hair appeared colorless and brittle. Little lines had formed at the corners of her eyes; her skin seemed rough and cracked, and other lines were already faintly showing from her nostrils to the corners of her mouth" (2, 241). It is not the work that has caused her rapid degeneration—instead, the description suggests that her body's youth, firmness, and striking color have all literally been *consumed.*

Reaffirming their status as commodities, Kauffman persistently likens prostitutes to livestock and emphasizes the insatiable consumer demand for them. Hermann emphatically describes the horrors of prostitution by noting that, "five thousand new ones are every year needed to maintain Chicago's standing supply of 25,000…in the crowded east side of NY, there are dragged each week hundreds of children and young women no one of whom, if sold outright, brings as much as a capable horse" (256).[212] Constructing prostitutes as products distances them from workers (who are the masculinized political agents in socialist thought)

212 Kauffman reprises this phrasing when describing a gathering of white slavers, among whom "there arose oaths almost technical, descriptions of women that sounded like auctioneers' announcements in a horsemarket" (327). On page 402, Mary adopts this perspective, seeing "the stolid policemen herding their charges as stockyard hands herd cattle for the slaughter."

while highlighting their status as sexed bodies—they are women before they are workers. In *HB*, Kauffman implicitly argues what he is elsewhere recorded as explicitly saying, that is: "*Woman* is still a slave and every woman who is placed in the position of slavery because of economic, physical or moral conditions is in the accepted sense a 'white slave.'"[213] This is a negative example, but I want to suggest that the very gendered anxieties that prevent a strict class analysis of prostitution, ultimately reveal a crisis in orthodox socialist theory whose resolution demanded the articulation of a more dialectical understanding of socialism. Moreover, socialist prostitution narratives like *HB* and *The Rose Door* formally demonstrate an awareness of such a crisis in their representations of (female) prostitutes and (male) socialists.

D. THE PROSTITUTE AND (THE LIMITS OF) SOCIALIST THEORY AND PEDAGOGY

The above discussion of strategies that distance the worker from the prostitute could account for how the white slave genre departs from other novels written by socialists, which typically end with the protagonist's conversion to socialism. Unlike Jurgis of Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* (1906), whose manhood can be saved (at least in part) by political commitment, prostitutes cannot be redeemed, which is illustrated in *The Jungle* itself through the character of Marija, Jurgis's cousin-in-law. Jurgis implores Marija to leave the brothel in which she was forced to work in order to support the family during his long absence. Now that he is a socialist and has steady employment, he feels that he can provide for her. Marija refuses to go, insisting, "I can't do anything. I'm no good—I take dope. What could you do with me?...I'll

213 This is an excerpt from an address Kauffman delivered to the National American Woman Suffrage Convention, at Philadelphia. It is quoted on page 315 in *Sexual Knowledge* (1913) by Winfield Scott Hall and Jeannette Winter Hall (Philadelphia: The International Bible House).

stay here till I die, I guess. It's all I'm fit for" (341). She is a casualty of capitalism. Her lack of fitness is connected to her general indifference to life and her adoption of a "business point of view," in which she assesses the family's failure to succeed as their failure to prostitute Jurgis's beautiful wife Ona when they had the chance since she "could have taken care of us all in the beginning" (301). Marija has submitted completely to the immoral system, while Jurgis, who has repeatedly engaged in corrupt behavior, still actively resists selling his wife's "honor" (303).

In *HB*, Mary goes from employment agency to settlement house to a missionary church looking for answers, but she never stumbles into a socialist meeting to get them. On the one hand, this could manifest a sexual double standard. Fallen women, no matter how unjust their fall, remain unredeemable. As in the case of the hesitation to make the prostitute a representative of the working-class, they cannot imagine her as their privileged political agent. On the other hand, the failure to redeem the prostitute might register an awareness of the insufficiency of socialist politics to address and understand the sexual oppression of women. Perhaps this is why prostitute characters like Mary, Carrie, and Marija are left in limbo at the novels' endings rather than dying.[214] Since prostitutes cannot be converted or saved, they can only function as objects rather than subjects of knowledge, but *HB* and *The Rose Door* begin to

214 This choice marks a variation from the white slave genre in which death is a common ending. Kauffman, in pointedly refusing to depict Mary's death (despite her constant illness and contemplation of suicide), distinguishes himself from the sentimental tradition (in which death from illness offers moral redemption for the impure and the chance for the morally pure to redeem the unregenerate) or more modern traditions (in which suicide presents death as rebellious or emancipatory, tragic or meaningless). Instead of capitalizing on the pathos of Mary's demise (something he has done in numerous other passages of the book), Kauffman takes a turn towards a strikingly unsentimental ending in which Mary's life (and death) is reduced to an impersonal calculation of her exchange value. Going back to her original brothel (where she now realizes that she had a comparatively good life, though once she would have "feared it more than death"), she asks her mistress to take her back. Rose Légère offers her charity but tells her in the friendliest manner that she cannot rehire Mary because "It wouldn't be good for business" (466). "You see," Rose informs her, "the life's got you, Violet: you're all in" (466). In the end, the question of Mary's life or death is its commercial value, reaffirming Kauffman's economic explanation of white slavery and showing us the immoral rationalization of individual bodies in the money system.

challenge this trend, and in doing so, critique the limits of socialist pedagogy that are revealed in their very failure to either save or convert working-class women.

In the opening of this chapter, I described how many novels written by members of the SP include run-ins with prostitutes that generate political epiphanies, a trope featured in Walter Marion Raymond's *Rebels of the New South* (1904), Walter Hurt's *The Scarlet Shadow* (1907), and Ernest Poole's *The Harbor* (1915).[215] Whether out of sympathy or horror, many socialist novels present a character's encounter with prostitution as a primary catalyst for his or her critical consciousness. More often than not, this character is a man, drawing attention to the prostitute's subjection to a privileged gaze and the gendered construction of gaining and raising political awareness. Similarly to Kauffman's Luke Haber, whose sexually-vulnerable fiancée becomes a symbol for his intellectual and spiritual transformation, the prostitute is frequently a literary type flattened to serve as "an object—a symbol, that reveal[s] the patriarchal values and themes of the male writers who depict her."[216]

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215 In Walter Marion Raymond's *Rebels of the New South* (1904), one of the main characters, Paul, marries Dorothy, a prostitute with a tragic history. The penniless, orphaned Dorothy allows herself to be seduced by an upper-class man who promises her marriage but instead leaves her alone to support his illegitimate child. Unable to find respectable work in her taboo "condition," she must turn to prostitution to survive. Paul explicitly notes seeing the innocent son and wronged mother in the brothel as the moment of his spiritual and moral awakening, that is, his conversion to socialism (202-3). In Walter Hurt's *The Scarlet Shadow* (1907), the pick-pocket philosopher, "Honest Bill," becomes a socialist in response to his long-lost twin sister's suicide. She was a prostitute whose "swan song" was a fiery socialist speech delivered to a swarm of hypocritical Christian reformers in Denver's red-light district. And in Ernest Poole's best-seller, *The Harbor* (1915), the narrator, Billy, describes how his brief foray into a working-class gang in the New York harbor is brought to a halt by encountering a lumpy and red-gartered prostitute in the lap of a sailor at the boarding house owned by a gang member's parents. The image of the red garters recurs, tainting all his early leanings towards sexual relationships with women until, on his college campus, he again runs into prostitutes, who are being rushed from the dorms by a mob of students—including the ones who hired them—and begins to realize the contradictions inherent in bourgeois, capitalist society. These are just a few samplings among many, indicating how the recurring figure of the prostitute was invoked for the purpose of the characters'—who are often surrogates for the ideal (male) readers'—radical educations.

216 See Pierre Horn and Mary Beth Pringle's introduction to *The Image of the Prostitute in Modern Literature* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co, 1984, pp. 1-7).

A Man's World (1912) by socialist Arthur Bullard provides a striking example of this trend. In the novel, the "eccentric millionaire" friend of the policeman narrator rescues an attractive lower-class prostitute from the street. He first uses her to "understand the poor," whom he finds surprisingly snobbish towards sympathetic members of his class, then weds her to mark his disdain for conventional society, impregnates her to prove that it is environmental conditions and not heredity that causes cultural degeneration, and lastly has her sit mutely through their political debates as a "symbol of life, a silent chorus of actuality" that authorizes their subject even if she cannot comprehend it.[217]

HB and *The Rose Door*, by contrast, show women gaining a social conscience through contact with prostitution. *HB* replicates the gendered and classed dimensions of knowledge by highlighting the asymmetrical power and understanding between narrator and protagonist,[218] but it also allows Mary insights in her own right. Instead of treating Mary only as an object for masculine, middle-class authority, she is also a subject in her own right, beginning to seriously think, which, as Kauffman warns his reader, is "a very dangerous thing in an exploited individual" (302). Though Mary's radical potential is not wholly fulfilled, her character still

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217 The narrator partly recognizes the problematic nature of their relationship by observing on more than one occasion that his friend never fully understood or appreciated his wife. Their child, a girl that the narrator helps raise, goes on to be a socialist. While this is a gendered construct that keeps in place women's status and object/victim, it is also notable that the men's access to economic injustice is through an acknowledgment of the sexual double standard and their own dominant gender position. Their "sex consciousness" as exploiters is a trigger for their class consciousness as exploited. These are dialectical moments, and they surface most significantly through the lens of gender (not race, as seen in the last chapter).

218 For instance, the narrator frequently reminds us that Mary's vision is flawed while he fills in the big picture for us. Similarly, Kauffman's Harvard-educated diction highlights a difference in education between himself and his subjects. When he describes Mary's very working-class family in the beginning, he uses words like "ménage" for their family, makes quips about the "proper conduct of the Denbigh domestic economy," and refers to the violent swinging of a wooden spoon to beat Mary as a "parabola." This is to say that the narrator is either consciously or unconsciously juxtaposing elevated language with "low" subject matter.

demonstrates and critiques the limitations of socialist pedagogy, opening up the opportunity for prostitutes and women to become subjects (instead of merely objects) of knowledge.

The Rose Door (1911), a prostitution narrative written by socialist Estelle Baker, offers an apt complement to *HB* because it was the only other socialist novel that was primarily about prostitution. Put out by Charles Kerr & Co, one advertisement for the book in the 1912 Volume of the *International Socialist Review* cites it as, "The most successful novel ever published by a Socialist house," [219] while another boasts that "It has remained for Socialism to discover the Cure for the Social Evil," and insists that, "you will find the cause of [prostitutes'] degradation—and the cure for the great Social Evil" in Baker's book (Vol. 13, 449, 191). Hence, like *HB*, *The Rose Door* is designated as a work of popular pedagogy.

Baker does not seem to have been either a prominent member of the Party or a prolific writer, but she was a member of Charles Kerr's cooperative publishing house and a frequent financial contributor. Her only novel traces the story of three working-class women who through various means wind up at the same San Francisco brothel. The opening half of *The Rose Door* provides the back stories of the three women. The first tracks Rebecca, a feisty Jewish immigrant whose desire to return to her fiancé in Russia makes her agree to prostitute herself for a short time only to find that her pimp has trapped her in the career by informing her whole family and withholding her earnings. The next vignette follows Anna, a beautiful Bay-Area orphan who is molested by her parents' former tenant, exploited as a servant by the families who "adopt" her thereafter, and eventually becomes a kept woman for a rich and talented Berkeley student. Their fantastic romance and dreams of married life comes to an end when Ralph mysteriously disappears, leaving Anna to fend for herself. The last sketch follows

219 This is perhaps a less impressive statistic than it may at first appear since socialist publishing houses printed very few novels. Charles Kerr had only four in its extensive catalog. However, *The Rose Door* did go through at least three printings.

Grace, a romantic college girl from Minnesota whose father dies, forcing her to leave school and take a mind-numbing office job. She falls deeply in love with a handsome traveling salesman who turns out to be married. He abandons Grace and their illegitimate child, a girl that she places in an orphanage before heading to San Francisco as the kept woman of a tubercular man. The second half of the novel introduces a seemingly idyllic upper-class community, describing the lives of three elite wives, who have consciously and hypocritically guarded themselves and their daughters against the seamy side of life. In turn, each of the prostitutes' stories becomes intertwined with that of an upper class woman via the prostitutes' seducers or patrons, all of whom are their sons and/or husbands. The women become disillusioned as their perfect families are compromised by shame, deceit, and disease.

It should be obvious, even from this brief description, that the educations of the women in these stories have been sadly neglected. The prostitutes of *HB* and *The Rose Door* are victims of romantic and sentimental conventions that have given them false expectations and sheltered them from sexual realities. The women are victims of sexual ignorance and romantic misconceptions, which vitally contribute to their economic exploitation. The remedy, in line with the mainstay of SP strategy, is education. The discourse surrounding (particularly women's) sex education is very similar to socialists' efforts to raise class consciousness. This is significant because it identifies the problematic power dynamics in the SP's vanguardism which assumed a (feminized) working class was duped by capitalism and would understand the truth if the (cognitively superior) Party members would only allow them to see reality.[220]

220 Kauffman himself discusses the SP as a "proselytizing order" wherein "members are expected to make converts to the cause" in *What is Socialism?* (174). For this reason, Kauffman suggest that socialists also to try to make people into "readers" because "They firmly believe that if they can get a man to reading books upon Socialism, even anti-Socialistic books, he is as good as converted" (174).

However, both *HB* and *The Rose Door* invoke and seriously question the class and gender dynamics of their socialist pedagogies. *The Rose Door* does so by contrasting two kinds of "reading," one that informs the romantic views of Anna and Grace with the demystifying experiences of the wives and socialist propaganda in the second half. Since the latter allows Mrs. Thomas to have "closed eyes which saw" for the first time, while the former merely perpetuates delusions, it is safe to say that the novel is privileging the type of reading of the world that Mrs. Thomas learns to do with the help of Grace. The last chapter dramatizes the pedagogical value of literature, posing Mrs. Thomas as an ideal reader who models the student of socialism for the audience, framing the propaganda through the perspective of an elite, white, virtuous woman who begins to (traumatically) interpret her own social world through the eyes of a socialist doctor. Though Mrs. Thomas initially resists the text since it offends her cultural predispositions, she ultimately accepts most of what the pamphlet says wholesale, interjecting affirming reactions between the excerpted paragraphs.[221] Of course, this "scene of reading," if it does empower a woman to understand the world, save her children, and take action for social change, still evokes the gender and class asymmetries that problematically underlie socialist rhetoric and education. For one, Mrs. Thomas still submits to the authority of male doctor, playing the part of a (feminine, passive) receptacle. For another, though Grace gives Mrs. Thomas the text and initiates her socialist education, her voice is silenced in the end, as Grace literally dies while Mrs. Thomas is in the process of reading. Grace's voice is subordinated to a man's and her life is essentially sacrificed for raising consciousness amongst the upper class.

221 For instance, she scolds herself: "I knew no more of the origin of marriage and private property that does Susie [her young daughter]! A well-informed woman! Who thought prostitution was entered upon for pleasure" (194); shows she takes the material seriously by constantly referencing the danger capitalism and prostitution pose to her own children: "My Frank! My Susie!" (200); and explicitly affirms the pamphlet's conclusions: "The concern of one is the concern of all…It is true, it is true!" (200).

Then again, *The Rose Door* seems to be at least partly aware of these asymmetries, drawing attention to the limitations of its pedagogy. While Greer's pamphlet is poised as a key through which to understand the text, the novel fails to be an effective narrative sheaf for the propaganda since its representation of the "actual lives" of the prostitutes and wives does not necessarily substantiate Greer's points. For instance, the pamphlet depicts women as historically inferior beings: "woman was first mastered, beaten into submission, robbed, outraged, violated; until her whole sweet, natural sex nature became distorted and stunted…Can there be any wonder that women are what they are—shallow, volatile, deceitful, vain, incapable of great love or great actions" (198). In fact, these descriptions could much more be accurately applied to the men of the novel, since the women are the clear victims of their deceit and vanity.

Besides Greer, *The Rose Door* features another male socialist educator who does not come in until the very end. Presumably responsible for Grace's informed perspective in the end, he is only represented indirectly through the tubercular prostitute's recollections. While the socialist is presented sympathetically, he knows Grace because he is a customer of The Rose Door, a brothel with a distinctly bourgeois clientele. Certainly, he becomes a vivid if not parodic example of the masculinist orthodox socialist when he tells the prostitute he is in bed with that socialism will end prostitution.[222] Against the radical literary tradition of a character who serves as a mouthpiece for the theory or politics that underlie the particulars of the narrative, Grace's unnamed socialist does not serve his proper "deus ex machina" function as Comrade Ostrinski (Jurgis's socialist mentor in *The Jungle*) does.

222 Indeed, it seems to be an indictment that there is no ideological compromise in his position.

HB has a similarly questionable socialist mouthpiece in Hermann Hoffman.[223] Hermann plays a heroic part in saving Mary from the brothel, but obviously his efforts are futile in the end since Mary ends up worse off than she was before. His attempts to educate her are equally in vain. Mary, wanting to "see it all," appeals to Hermann's "authority" which is reinforced by how he "supplemented his Marx with facts and statistics of a later date" (256). But, while he does "open [Mary's] eyes not a little" in this exchange, their only extended conversation takes place immediately after she is sprung from her first brothel, that is, before she toils her way back to the street for the next two hundred pages. The prematurity and transience of her encounter is emphasized by how Hermann's character almost drops out completely thereafter, coming back into the narrative mainly in the context of (what I have already described as his problematic) marriage to Katie, the feisty Irish girl who refuses even to give his socialist ideas a chance but did bravely resist seduction by her boss. In the last glimpse that we get of Hermann, he is attending socialist meetings in the evenings and then getting up early for morning mass to expiate his radical sins from the night before—an image of neutralized, if not laughably compromised politics (428).

While the male socialists' authority is put in question, the prostitutes are given a degree of authority. In a chapter meaningfully titled "Awakening," invoking the trope so often used to

223 Hermann is marked as both parallel to and departing from the author in significant ways. On the one hand, his last name bears a curious phonic resemblance to "Kauffman," an optimistic choice of rhyme since the character's name evokes the German word for "hope" ("hoffen"). The narrator also aligns himself with Hermann by using the same terms to describe the system of white slavery to the reader that Hermann uses to describe it to Mary: "Poverty, which produces the slave, breeds, just as surely, the slaver" and again: "wherever walked the great god Poverty, that great god led Prostitution by the hand" (323, 465). On the other hand, Hermann is foreign-born, fitting the pervasive (and xenophobia-inducing) stereotype of radicals as being immigrant agitators whereas Kauffman's family came to America before the Revolution (Hapke 118). Hermann's foreignness is drawn attention to by the exaggerated representation of his accent, which renders his message more distant and unfamiliar to American readers. But, also unlike Kauffman, he is working-class and self-educated—in some senses, a more authentic Marxist. The ambivalent identification between Kauffman and Hoffman may reveal some of the formers' anxiety about the pedagogical dynamic of the novel.

describe socialist's efforts to raise class consciousness,[224] Kauffman presents Mary as becoming a subject of knowledge when she begins to interpret her own bodily experience. The morning after Mary is kidnapped, instead of waking up in the bridal bed she expected, Mary finds herself alone in a brothel coming to terms with her lost virginity. Mary's dawning realization that her supposed fiancé deflowered and abandoned her is simultaneously one of the most graphic/melodramatic and inexplicit/vague scenes of Kauffman's novel:

> That which had happened—there memory, in a blinding blast, reasserted itself. What had been but half-wittingly accepted was now fully known. Hot irons were branding upon her brain the full history of all that had occurred: the deeds for which she had at last learned the name, and the deeds that, even in her own frightened soul, were nameless. There was nothing—nothing of her, hand and foot, and mouth and eye and soul—that was not defiled.[225] For herself, for Max, but most of all for the hideous facts of life, she shook in physical disgust. Before the face of such things, what must birth and marriage mean? She opened her eyes, but she could not look at her silent witnesses; she shut her lids, but she saw, behind them, the hairy arms of a gorilla closing in on her, to break her and bear her away. For one moment, all that she had loved she hated, and for the next, seizing his smiling reassurance as the one vow that could legalize what nothing could refine, all that she had come to hate she tried to force herself to love. (51-52)

Kauffman's description evokes many Progressive discourses that inform socialist and prostitution literature: anxieties about atavism, ambivalence towards marriage, and suppression of women's threatening sexuality. However, what is perhaps most remarkable about the scene is the unexpected turn of its conclusion. Though Mary's "awakening" is presented as horrific, corrupting, and unspeakably abject, it is also posed as a learning experience or intellectual

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224 Kraditor catalogs a bounty of socialist speeches and articles that employ the language of awakening the sleeping masses. "It hardly needs to be added," she writes, "that the alarm clock was usually the radicals" (237). The metaphor of awakening, which is often used to express the stirring of sexual impulses, was also widely invoked by antiprostitution reformers, such as Roe, who credited himself with awakening the conscience (instead of class consciousness) of the nation.

225 Notice how the torso is entirely left out in this cataloging of body parts.

epiphany and one that inexplicably opens Mary up to the oft-repeated environmentalist[226] insights of the narrator and his presumably socialist analysis of society:

> She understood now so much that she had never understood before…She still feared…the swaying bulk of masculinity that had been her father, but *she began to see in him the logical result of forces* that were themselves, as yet, beyond her ken; and *she looked with a new and pitying vision upon the picture* of her little, work-worn and care-marked mother stooping over the polished kitchen-stove. (my emphasis 52)

Mary's loss of virginity, then, explicitly serves as the catalyst for her critical consciousness. Somehow, being raped makes her understand the social and economic dimensions of her unhappy upbringing. Her newfound apprehension assumes a deep connection between sexual and economic struggles (what I take to be the cautious but principal argument of the novel), a connection that is reinforced by Mary's abstract recollection of her family, wherein her father becomes a representative of his dominant gender position, a "swaying bulk of masculinity," while her mother is depicted as a stooped worker. Besides demonstrating that gender and class are interdependent categories, Mary's mental association between her rape and her parents' home uncomfortably links marriage and prostitution, suggesting them as parallel arrangements in which women are sexually and economically disempowered.

Mary's epiphany further implies that the body is a source of knowledge—she obtains an understanding akin to that of the narrator through sex rather than formal education. However, the body turns out to be an ambivalent source of knowledge: it variously produces, limits, and even suppresses understanding. While her bodily experience generates an epiphany, it also

226 "Environmentalist" in this context does not refer to the advocacy of environmental causes, but rather to the Progressive belief that people are first and foremost products of their environment.

leaves her physically marked, as is seen when she must grapple with "the strange face that fronted her" in the mirror, "a face the more strange because it was the intimate become alien, a ruin, an accusation." Her body immediately manifests her terrible knowledge: "Framed in a tangle of dank hair, the cheeks, once pink, were chalky now, and splotched with red, the mouth that she had known only as full and firm, was loose and twisted; the eyes that had been blue, now circled with black, burned in blood-shot fields like coals of angry fire" (53). Her rapid physical degeneration shows the cost of understanding and foreshadows how her individual, suffering body will eventually eclipse her comprehension of the world.

The representation of Mary, then, evokes the tensions between bodies, education, and political/economic agency. Mary's bodily knowledge and the completion of her education correlating with her basically being handed a death sentence question the SP's stance that education is emancipatory and that intellectual understanding of Marxist theory is a vital prerequisite to radical political commitment. *HB* also seems to suggest that Mary's body is a source of knowledge, but not of political agency, providing a pessimistic assessment of education and "micropolitics."

And yet, there are moments of potential for seeing women's sexual and class struggles as legitimate political activities. If discourses from the field of education and the battlefield marked radicals' perception of and appeals to workers (Kraditor 238), those rhetorics are almost exclusively applied to the female characters in *HB*. As I already mentioned, Kauffman's only use of the word "comrade" references Katie and Carrie's gender and class solidarity. Similarly, when Katie "wins" a long battle of class and sexual struggle with her boss at the department store, her victory is described as a "revolution," the only time the term is used in the novel (347). Her boss fires her (implicitly for not giving him sexual favors), so she decides to loudly

exclaim the real reason for her firing unless he gives her the rest of her week's wages and a recommendation. Hence, Katie is actually able to instrumentalize this prohibition on discussing sexual manners that leads to women's exploitation to her economic advantage.

The Rose Door goes further in some ways than *HB* to anticipate how women's sexual struggles might lead to socioeconomic transformations since the wives' and prostitutes' rebellions against men serve to radicalize some of them. Not only does Baker leave no marriage intact by the end, she also includes the formation of a new kind of family when Mrs. Thomas chooses Grace over her cheating husband, ejecting Merritt from their home while incorporating his illegitimate child into it. In the end, the confusion and complication that emerges out of socialist's endeavoring to represent the prostitute may help to overcome the barriers to imagining her and women in general as political and economic agents.

E. CONCLUSION

The aftermath of the antiprostitution campaign unfortunately shows that whereas it was difficult to "imagine" and articulate sexual exploitation or expression, it was more difficult to even generate any interest in imagining economic degradation. Instead of seeing the sexual and economic as related, public sentiment began to increasingly dissociate the two realms. Haag points out how the very effectiveness of the critique of free labor that came out of Progressive antiprostitution campaigns, which "reintroduced women's sexual commerce as an articulation of violence rather than her freedom," ultimately served to "rescript" liberalism, shifting the site of our "natural expression of the citizen's inherent freedom" from the economy

to our personal, private, sexual lives.[227] Hence, sex became "privatized" and the economic and the personal were placed increasingly at odds with one another.[228] Of course, far from undermining capitalism, relocating freedom in our personal lives serves to perpetuate a fantasy of a private realm untouched by commerce and to magnify sexuality as part of our inherent individuality (something given rather than socially produced).

The hesitancy to pose the prostitute as a figure for the working class reveals the complicated rhetorics of gender and class that serve as sites of contestation for a socialist ideology. While political ideologies are always "in process," socialist prostitution novels are significantly transitional texts that mark a crisis in the Party, specifically over the issue of sexuality. Torn between the more socially-conservative old guard and the emerging bohemian intellectuals, sexuality played an important role in the divergent views as to the means and ends of social change.

The debate about sexuality in the SP had serious implications for imagining the correlation between social and economic equality, which, as discussed in Chapter Two, remained a contentious issue amongst socialists. Since many Party member's predispositions towards *social* inegalitarianism "went far deeper than opposition to economic or political inequality," "most radicals" in the Progressive Era "resembled most of their contemporaries" with respect to their thinking about social categories other than class (Kraditor 203-204). That the White Slavery Scare and socialist antiprostitution campaigns marked a transitional moment in the SP that ultimately led to a more explicit and progressive stance on gender (and on the

227 Dale Bauer's *Sex Expression* (2009) also traces this trajectory, but does not specifically address white slavery and socialism as contributing forces in this cultural transformation.

228 "The transformation from classic to modern liberal conviction entailed, the transposition of the individual citizen's freedom from interference from economic contracts to personal, (hetero)sexual contracts as the epitome of nation freedom under the social contract. It also entailed elaborating this person relation as contrary to and outside of economic market transactions" (Haag 82).

necessity of fighting simultaneously for social and economic equality) is reflected in the increasing participation of women, with female membership rising from three percent in 1904 to fifteen in 1913 (Zinn 341). The national platform also included the demand for suffrage for the first time in 1912 and established a position for an organizer of women's committees and propaganda (Weinstein 53-62).

Kauffman's novel exhibits a recognition of the particularity of women's bodies both out of anxiety towards and social sensitivity to gender. Although sexual violence is presented as a site of class consciousness, it is not yet possible to see sexual acts as positively contributing to the emancipation of the working class (which I will explore in the next chapter), but it does lay the groundwork for seeing sex as part of socialist theory and strategy. Kauffman's opus does, beginning with *HB* and extending into the rest of his cycle, continue to present a serious counterdiscourse to heterosexual contracts as the epitome of liberal freedom.

The repeated trope in Kauffman's novel of bodily knowledge that connects sexual and class struggle also limits learning to acts sexual violence, not pleasure. But, it is possible, that in locating sexuality as problem, as serious category for theoretical consideration, he helped to imagine reciprocal relationships between sex and economics that were not abusive. In the next chapter, I will address a set of novels written by socialists that take up where Kauffman left off, imagining how affirmative projects of expressing sexuality (especially outside of the sanctioned medical and scientific discourse of sex hygiene) could help lead to economic emancipation (and vice versa). Kauffman helped to initiate this dialectical perspective in American socialism, but, whereas Kauffman's deterministic perspective tended to overemphasize the omnipotent system, the bohemian socialists who took up the push for sexual emancipation tended to overemphasize individual agency over structural constraints. Consequently, they also transformed the figure of the prostitute from the victimized "white slave" of antiprostitution rhetoric into the heroic

new woman, who was a model of sexual freedom and economic independence in her bold effrontery to all Victorian bourgeois conventions.[229]

229 Indeed, *The Masses* magazine received so many romanticized depictions of the prostitute that their editorial board eventually had to issue a notice that they would no longer accept submissions on the topic (Stansell 287).

V. CHAPTER 4. "STRUGGLING FOR A BETTER FORM": SOCIALISM, FEMINISM, AND SEXUALITY IN THE PRE-WAR SOCIALIST NOVELS OF UPTON SINCLAIR AND ARTHUR BULLARD

A. SEX EXPLOITATION TO SEX EMANCIPATION

In socialist prostitution novels of the Progressive era (1901-1917), female characters tentatively experience "natural" sexual awakenings that are quickly perverted. Reginald Wright Kauffman's bestselling *The House of Bondage* (1910), for instance, opens with Mary Denbigh lingering in a picturesque river valley where the "summits were…rich with coming life," the "crops were even then germinating," the "[b]irds were mating in the sap-wet trees," and the air is was filled with the "subtle, poignant scent" of "flowering seeds" (8). The idyllic setting evokes her budding womanhood, and accordingly, as she reflects upon the boy she just met, "Something—something new and nameless and wonderful—rose in her throat and left her heart hammering an answer to the new world around her" (8). This awakening sexual feeling rapidly leads her astray as she is attracted to the wrong man, a cadet who promises to marry her but puts her in a New York brothel instead. Following her life of forced prostitution, Mary winds up a numbed and bitter degenerate, a walking corpse who identifies the greatest crime against her as being that white slavery "had murdered Love" (465). Tellingly, a few years later, Arthur Bullard has the heroine of his female, working-class bildungsroman, *Comrade Yetta* (1913), follow the opposite trajectory as Mary. Yetta is at first unnaturally repressed—her indoctrination with the dominant bourgeois sexual norms leads to her almost being captured by a white slaver who is pretending to court her for his wife in the early chapter, "The Pit's Edge" (60) and then to her fleeing from an engagement that fails to live up to her romantic

ideal of Love in "The Palace of Dreams" (312). When she does eventually marry her coworker Isadore Braun, she remains scared of sex, and it is not until she performs the deed that her "natural" sexuality is belatedly unleashed in a chapter bluntly titled, "Yetta Finds Herself" (423). Since the whole chapter is about how "[s]he had learned to love *him*" and "this mystic, unexpressible joy of sex" (433-434), it is safe to say that her self-realization happens in proportion to her realizing the "reality of love" with Isadore. In both cases, Mary and Yetta must traumatically give up bourgeois romantic Love with a capital L. But, whereas sexual exploitation provides Mary with a class consciousness that does not save her or lead to political action while leaving the former ideal of Love intact, sexual pleasure provides Yetta with a more dialectical understanding of reality that incorporates the "personal" and "sexual" without compromising her class consciousness or political engagement. This transition between Mary and Yetta, then, is also a shift from an orthodox, "machine" socialism to a more dynamic and uneven "living" politics inspired in part by the sexual impulse itself.

If the White Slavery Scare and early socialists' literary responses to it exhibited a crisis in public and political understandings of female sexuality, a new generation of pre-war socialists was instrumental in articulating emergent sexual constructions, through their lives and literature. In terms of mainstream views of sexuality, the Victorian "vision of the ideal woman, pristine and unsullied by social reality," which almost invariably "served as the cultural foil for the prostitute" was fast being replaced by a more politically, professionally, and sexually empowered model of femininity (Connelly 45). Ultimately, the figure of the prostitute anticipated the emerging feminine ideal: "the problematical woman would become the new woman," who "sought the very sexuality that had been her sister's downfall and made of it the spiritual regeneration of man"—precisely through de-commodifying it (Connelly 46, Buhle 265). The White Slavery Scare provided an opportunity for American socialists to expose and

critique the relationship between the economy and sexuality, but writers such as Reginald Wright Kauffman were mainly concerned with the perverse capitalism-sexuality connection. It remained for the new generation of radicals epitomized by the Greenwich Village intellectuals[230] to begin exploring the possibilities of the socialism-sexuality intersection. Of course, because of existing sexual conventions and women's perceived and real financial dependence, it was most often female sexuality that was at the true crux of any debate about the relationship between sex and economics across the political spectrum. For radicals, then, "New Women" were "cast as the movers of history, standard-bearers of the modernist telos" (Stansell 225). In this chapter, I consider novels written by men about characters like Yetta, in other words, novels that tentatively begin to explore women's sexual expression and emancipation, pleasure and fulfillment as a result of and means to socioeconomic transformation. In doing so, these novels contributed to the articulation and critique of dominant and emergent understandings of both sexuality and socialism.

B. FEMINISM AND SOCIALISM

In 1913, Max Eastman, editor of *The Masses* and founder of Men for Women's Suffrage, proclaimed in an editorial, "The question of sex equality, the economic, social, political independence of woman, stands by itself parallel and equal in importance to any other question of the day."[231] Eastman represented a new trend in socialism, initiated by the Bohemian milieu of Greenwich Village, that combined economic and culture radicalism. The Greenwich Village

230 The Greenwich Village milieu included a set of bohemian artists and intellectuals who had various radical projects and affiliations that spanned politics, culture, and aesthetics. The prominent members of the SP in the mix included Floyd Dell, Max Eastman, Crystal Eastman, Ida Rauh, Margaret Sanger, John Reed, and Randolph Bourne.

231 From his editorial in the *The Masses*, Vol. 4, (January 1913), pg. 5.

intellectuals—a group that historian Christine Stansell has recently dubbed the "American Moderns" as progenitors of political, literary, and sexual modernism[232]—confirmed what conservative critics had long suspected: that socialists and feminists were in league with one another, united in a conspiracy to destroy traditional families and femininity.[233] The new Bohemian strain in the SP centered in Greenwich Village may have been small in numbers, but its artists and intellectuals were public figures who ultimately "had a disproportionate voice in the shaping of the nation's culture" (Cantor 49). In particular, they helped to articulate new and reciprocal understandings of politics and sexuality, pointing out how sex and economics are material realities that are equally mystified in bourgeois culture.

"Feminism" as a term only appeared in America in the 1910s and was in fact pioneered by this new class of radicals. This modern nomenclature was used to distinguish a new order of women who were departing from the conventional values and polite methods of the Women's Movement (associated with turn-of-the-century suffrage and temperance campaigns) to fight—using militant methods if need be—for full economic, political, and social equality (Stansell 227). Whereas the Women's Movement often rhetorically valorized women through their traditional roles as wives and mothers, feminism depended upon women's access to paid work outside the home. As women's economic and social oppression was seen as a function of their

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232 The "sexual modernism" called for by bohemians was based on the emancipation of women and a "militant belief in sexual equality" (Stansell 226). Besides calling for women's economic independence and sexual freedom for all following an era of "repression," it involved a push for one world and one humanity (versus separate spheres and the battle between the sexes). Despite stressing complete intimacy and comradeship in all things, sexual modernism tended to be rigorously heterosexual in its orientation and short-sighted in its consideration of domestic labor. See Stansell's chapter on "Sexual Modernism" in *American Moderns*, pp. 225-272.

233 See, for instance, B.V. Hubbard's *Socialism, Feminism, Suffragism, the Terrible Triplets: Connected by the Same Umbilical Cord, and Fed from the Same Nursing Bottle* (Chicago: American Publishing Company, 1915) or Fred Perry Power's article, "Feminism and Socialism" in Henry Holt's *The Unpopular Review* (Vol. 3, no. 5, Jan – March 1915, pp. 118-133).

sexual subordination and repression in "slave marriages" and bourgeois Victorian culture, sexual equality and emancipation were integral to the feminist program.

The Greenwich Village intellectuals proposed not only a revised version of women's rights but also intervened in the strategies and ideologies of the traditional socialist movement. They challenged orthodox socialists' unconditional privileging of class over gender, "placing culture on a parity with economics" (Buhle 269). Unlike the Old Guard of the SP, who were more likely to see socialism as the means of achieving existing, pre-established cultural and sexual ideals, the new generation assumed economic transformation would dramatically change prevailing cultural and sexual values and vice versa. The rhetoric of early socialists touted workers as either chaste, noble, and family-oriented heroes who boldly defied the degrading effects of capitalism or as licentious, corrupt, and degenerate victims of the same. The new generation of socialists reversed both these positions, embracing the popular sexualization of the working class and imagining them as the forbearers of sexual as well as economic freedom, heroic for their defiance of bourgeois convention.

Party records show that the bohemians' more dialectical understanding of socialism had an impact on the SP, as gender issues only substantially enter their *official* politics for the first time in the 1910s.[234] However, while the Old Guard limited their political strategies to electoral politics (and their political commitments seldom entered into their home life)[235], the

234 See Socialist Party (U.S. and Local New York) Minutes; Socialist Collections 1872-1956; R7124/reels 9-10; Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, Elmer Holmes Bobst Library, New York University Libraries. The discussion of gender is still far more limited and conservative than among culture radicals, but they do begin establishing committees for propaganda among women, make official statements about suffrage, and specifically discuss organizing female workers.

235 Kraditor suggests that the majority of "socialist men were not socialists at home" because "they did not consider socialism relevant to what went on in the home." Instead, they imagined that socialism was only relevant in the "public sphere" (197).

younger generation demanded new values and aesthetics, expanding the political arena into their art and personal lives. Consequently, feminism's highlighting of domestic relations returned a sense of individual agency to a philosophy characterized by a disempowering "machine" materialism and environmentalism. The emergence of the Birth Control Movement in the 1910s, which was led by many members of the SP including Margaret Sanger, Antoinette Konikow, Jessie Ashley, Caroline Nelson, Ida Rauh, and Rose Pastor Stokes is indicative of the feminist intervention in socialist politics.[236] Besides explicitly highlighting the intersections between economic and sexual relations, birth control advocates opened up the personal as a legitimate arena for direct action and political resistance, allowing for the celebration of local and immediate gains within a massive global struggle.[237] While the socialist revolution of society might be far in the future, "escaping their own narrowly defined sex roles" and "welcoming the liberation of female sexuality" allowed "self-aware socialists the means to improve the quality of their own lives while joyfully engaging in the struggle" (Buhle 265).

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236 The Birth Control Movement evidenced bohemians' commitment to practical politics on the ground, but it was as much about free speech as it was about contraception. Since the same Comstock anti-obscenity law that led to the censorship of racy literature prevented the distribution of contraceptive information, socialists' campaign was based on equal education/access to knowledge for the poor. Essentially, they were fighting for the same thing that they were in their art and literature: the right to speak openly about sex and the cultural change that would look favorably upon such free expression. However, in spite of their daring, birth control advocates were still clearly conscientious of social and sexual conventions, for instance, addressing their agitation mainly to married women.

237 As an example, in Rose Pastor Stokes' unproduced screenplay for a birth control propaganda film, *Shall the Parents Decide?* (1916), she argues for contraception by asserting, "A man burdened with an over-large family cannot afford even to rebel against low wages" (3), and, "One of the effective means of improving the position of the worker lies in regulating his own numbers" (6). While these statements sound ostensibly socialist, they actually offer interventions in SP theories in tactics by 1) challenging the assumption that the worse their conditions, the more likely workers are to revolt and 2) providing a model of individual agency that has mass social impact by offering concrete ways for workers to improve their lives based on their own initiative.

The political intervention of the younger generation of the SP was also consciously literary:

> What characterized the person of advanced opinions in the first two decades of the twentieth century…was his position with regard to such issues as childhood, education, and sex; sex above all. Politics by comparison was almost immaterial, if by politics one refers to the traditional business of government and statecraft: taxes, tariffs, treaties. But the new radicals had not so much abandoned politics as redefined it, bringing to political debate questions formerly reserved to art and letters. (Lasch 90)

Hence, the Bohemians simultaneously made arguments for both sexuality *and* literature as means for socioeconomic transformation, reworking the more structuralist and scientific tendencies of orthodox Marxism.[238] Ultimately, then, I am concerned with how the sexual and literary occupations of the younger generation of socialists informed conceptions of socialism (and vice versa). In particular, I am interested in how those popular pre-war novels written by members of the SP that are heavily invested in representing sexuality reflect and refract the concerns of the new generation of socialists. In doing so, these transitional novels thematize a struggle for a "better form"—aesthetically, politically, and socially—revising on the one hand the rhetorics of scientific socialism and sex education, and on the other hand, dominant socialist and realist aesthetics.

C. FREE LOVE AND SOCIALISM

With the dawn of feminism, free love re-entered socialist discourse, confirming another long-held popular indictment of socialism. Especially given the notoriety of the sexual practices of nineteenth-century experimental communes in the U.S., free love practices had long been associated with socialism and were one of the chief means of publically discrediting the SP

238 Indeed, it is precisely in this moment and among these authors that a program for radical aesthetics begins to develop. (I might go so far as to argue that sexual representation was the catalyst for the formation of a coherent radical aesthetic in the U.S.)

(Buhle 251-252).[239] Especially at a time in which race suicide,[240] divorce, and the overthrow of the traditional family were omnipresent risks, free love posed just as grave a threat to civilization as class warfare in popular discourse.

Much like prostitution in the Progressive Era, free love had many definitions. On the socially conservative side, "free love" was liberally applied to describe any behavior that violated the dictates of Victorian civilized morality, such as divorce, adultery, premarital sex, and cohabitation. Conservatives saw "free love" as plain promiscuity—the freedom *to* act on one's animal instincts[241] without regard to spiritual, legal, or social authorities. It is not obvious how economic equality or "control" would lead to sexual anarchy, but, most often in the U.S., the belief that "socialist philosophy" demanded free love had nothing directly to do with their economic program, but rather the antireligious or "atheistic" attitude of scientific socialism.[242] Associating the "materialist" perspective with amorality and an unhealthy fixation

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239 Thomas Dixon wrote a very popular antisocialist trilogy of novels that all appeal to this favorite line of attack. The three include the best-selling *The One Woman* (1903), *Comrades* (1909) and *The Root of Evil* (1911). In John Spargo's review of *The One Woman* in *The Comrade* (Vol.2, 1903), he expresses his exhaustion and exasperation: "it is, of course, based upon the 'menace to the family' idea. Whoever imagined any other attack upon Socialism appearing in a novel?" (281).

240 "Race suicide," was a concept introduced around the turn of the century and was popularized by Theodore Roosevelt. Inspired by nativist (and classist/sexist/racist) fears, Roosevelt worried that the birth rate for white, middle-class citizens was rapidly diminishing while the birth rate for new immigrants was dramatically on the rise. Many assumed that such disproportionate reproductive tendencies would lead to national or racial decline.

241 Ironically, "freely" acting upon one's instincts is also to be enslaved by them in most conservative rhetoric.

242 B.V. Hubbard's definition of "liberty" resonates with conservatives' understanding of "free love": "Socialist liberty consists in being free from the moral code, as laid down by the law of Moses, or any church, and also freedom from any 'conventionality' which is not agreeable. Synonym, 'License'" (131).

on the bodily, one critic argued, "Economic determinism keeps one's gaze upon the ground" (166) and hence, for socialists, "love" is a mere "animal sex sensation" (182).[243]

Since socialist thinkers routinely attacked the bourgeois family and institution of marriage, people assumed they wanted to overthrow the family and monogamy in general. Economically, conservatives predicted state support of children would break down the traditional family and turn the home into a "free lunch counter." Many, then, shared socialists' belief that marriage and family were inherently linked to capitalism and private property but imagined this as a positive rather than degrading connection.[244] Embedded in this perspective is the assumption that women and their sexuality are the property of particular men. As Roosevelt knowingly warned, "It is not an accident that makes thoroughgoing and radical Socialists adopt the principles of free love as a necessary sequence to insisting that no man shall have the right to what he earns" (240).

Much of the outcry, then, against free love was motivated by an anxiety about changing constructions of femininity as women were gaining increasing political and economic visibility. Socialism and free love were posed as "an insult to the womanhood of America" that would bring women down to an "evil equality of moral turpitude" (Roosevelt 241). Beyond moral arguments, conservatives found anthropological ammunition for their critiques of sexual equality. Since a high degree of sexual differentiation was often seen as the hallmark of

243 See David Goldstein, *Socialism: the Nation of Fatherless Children* (1903).

244 For instance, conservative social and political scientist, William Graham Sumner, argued that "pair marriage is monopolistic" (376). Therefore, socialists are "forced to go to war on marriage and the family because [in them] lie the strongholds of 'individualistic vices' which he cannot overcome. He has to mask this battery, however because he dare not openly put it forward" (376-377).

advanced civilizations, sexual equality (especially as imagined by feminists) was associated with regression and race suicide.[245]

Choosing to remain strategically agnostic about most non-class-based issues, the SP never did make an official statement that either confirmed or denied conservatives' suspicions,[246] which is why the socialist connection to free love had to be constantly revealed through rigorous exposition of the lives and writings of its individual adherents. Most conservatives had to draw their evidence that socialists were free lovers from the work of Continental authors since Europe had a more permissive culture on sexual questions.[247] Though the SP did not endorse a specific position on the sex problem or make any definite predictions about the future of women, that did not keep many of its members from making their own polemical statements on these topics. The perspectives on the issue were diverse, but, generally speaking, a socialist's investment in and definition of free love were gauges of his or her attitude towards "feminism" and its relationship to socialism. In the first decade of the SP, socialists in the sexually-conservative U.S. most often rejected the term altogether. Those who rejected it, did so either because they believed there was no connection between private

245 Hubbard again provides a good example here. His definition of a feminist is "A woman who wants all the privileges of a woman, and all the rights of man, and does not want the duties of woman….Neither man, nor woman, but a being more correctly referred to as 'IT'" (129). He also refers to the "New Freedom of Woman," which he rightly outlines as including economic independence, access to paid work, suffrage, divorce, the power to act on their sexual preferences, and the right to choose or refuse motherhood regardless of their marital status, as "a state lower than that of the savage or even of the wild animals. The brightest jewel in the crown of shame which Socialism would press down upon the head of woman" (132).

246 Importantly, it is not because the issue never came up. David Goldstein was a former socialist who began his anti-socialist campaign because of the failure of a resolution in his Massachusetts Local that would refuse Party sanction for any member who spoke about or promoted free love.

247 Socialist novelist themselves often used misguided, free-loving European radicals as foils for chaste, happily-married American socialists. See for instance, I.K. Friedman's *By Bread Alone* (1901), Charlotte Teller's *The Cage* (1906), or Florence Converse's *The Children of Light* (1912).

and public morality, sexuality and economics[248] or because they believed there was a unidirectional, pre-established connection: the dawn of socialism would perfect marriage and home life that were compromised by capitalism. Right-wing theorist John Spargo repeatedly articulated such a perspective in his prolific propaganda work, claiming that free love was a relic of naïve utopian socialists and no one besides anarchists believed in it today.[249]

Indeed, socialists rarely seemed to take their endorsements or definitions of free love as far as (especially female) anarchists of the time period such as Emma Goldman and Voltairine deCleyre who had long ago adopted the cause of free love and were highly critical of marriage.[250] Hutchins Hapgood observed in his 1909 study, *An Anarchist Woman*, that

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248 In this camp, there are socialists such as novelist and Vida Scudder and James Connolly. Scudder, a professor and novelist and socialist of the Christian variety, published many a defense of the morality of socialism in genteel magazines, insisting that, "Theories of free love, have, of course, absolutely nothing to do with economic socialism, in spite of a foolish confusion of thought in some quarters" (e.g. *The Social Conscience*, April 1909). Connolly is famous for getting in a polemical debate with Daniel DeLeon after the SLP leader produced the first translation of August Bebel's *Woman under Socialism* in 1904. Even though DeLeon was not himself a supporter of free love, Connolly lambasted him for scaring away comrades (especially women) by endorsing a book that did support it. He wrote an editorial to *The People* that referred to *Woman* as "an attempt to seduce the proletariat from the firm ground of political and economic science on to the questionable ground of physiology and sex." Connolly complained that Bebel was particularly offensive to women, and that his work would effectively repel rather than attract them to socialism.

249 Spargo was the major theorist of the right wing of the SP, and denying that there was any necessary connection between socialism and free love was one of the major projects in his propaganda work, such as *The Spiritual Significance of Modern Socialism* (New York: B.W. Huebsch, 1908), *Applied Socialism* (New York: B.W. Huebsch, 1912) and *Socialism and Motherhood* (New York: B.W. Huebsch, 1914). Spargo's position also resonates with a reform tradition that was associated with works like Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and carried into early (especially Christian) socialism in the U.S. This tradition, which includes female socialist thinkers like May Walden, May Wood Simons, and Francis Willard, posits the home as a site of resistance to (instead of collusion with) capitalism. Francis Willard, who was also the head of the Christian Women's Temperance League, argued that the aim of socialism was to make the whole world "homelike."

250 See, for instance, Goldman's chapter on "Love and Marriage" from her collection, *Anarchism and Other Essays* (New York: Mother Earth Press, 1917), in which she claims that "Marriage and love have nothing in common; they are as far apart as the poles; are, in fact, antagonistic to each other" (233). Goldman instead characterizes marriage as "primarily an economic arrangement, an insurance pact," except "more binding, more exacting" and with "insignificantly small" returns "compared with the investments" (234). DeCleyre, in her more sober prose put it as bluntly in her essay on "The Woman

"Anarchism in Europe is mainly political; in America it is mainly sexual; for the reason that there is less freedom of expression about sex in American than in Europe: so there is a stronger protest here against the conventions in this field—as the yoke is more severely felt" (153). Socialist authors frequently exploited public opinion on the matter, differentiating themselves from anarchists in their literature by casting anarchists as the licentious, violent, passionate foils to chaste, nonviolent, rational socialists.[251] As Walter Rideout points out, "Although willing to attack sex ignorance, prostitution, and venereal disease as aspects of an archaic social system, proudly ignoring the epithet of 'salacious' in their devotion to Truth, they were almost unanimously unwilling, at least in their books, to condones a sex relationship outside the marriage bond…[F]ree love is for Anarchists, and capitalists"[252] (74).

While traditional socialists rejected the term free love altogether, the new generation was beginning to reappropriate it from its licentious implications.[253] Although socialists' visions of free love varied widely in terms of its relation to marriage and monogamy, those who

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Question": "Marriage is not in the interest of women. It is a pledge from the marrying man to the male half of society (women are not counted in the State), that he will not shirk his responsibilities upon them! Marriage is discredited, by its results as well as by its origins" (223). Of course, it is notable that these are both female anarchists who acknowledged many of their male comrades (like those in the SP) thought that there was "no woman question apart from our present industrial situation" (deCleyre 223).

251 I.K. Friedman was already evoking such a juxtaposition in his 1901 novel *By Bread Alone* in which the blonde, virtuous Blair Carrhart advocates for peaceful methods of building a cooperative commonwealth against the shady, vulpine Sophia Goldstein who uses her snaky sexuality to lure men to her anarchist cause (that is, destroying civilization as we know it one bomb at a time). Carrhart sticks faithfully to his one hometown sweetheart who he eventually marries while Sophia seduces multiple men in accordance with her political motives.

252 Not surprisingly, Upton Sinclair has a few (very unpopular) novels that go into detail about the Bacchanalian habits of capitalists for whom conspicuous consumption is also the guiding principle of their sex lives, like *The Metropolis (1908)* and *The Moneychangers (1908)*—two texts that nearly ruined his literary reputation.

253 See, for instance, Reginald Wright Kauffman's novel *The Sentence of Silence* (1911) in which he has his enlightened socialist heroine in scold a suitor who makes a pass at her, explaining to him that she believes in "free love," *NOT* "free lust" (201). By the former she means simply, "There is no love but free love. When love isn't free, it isn't love" (201).

professed it usually defined it in terms of a freedom *from* all oppressive socioeconomic influences (the State, organized religion, capitalism, etc).[254] This definition is basically synonymous with twentieth-century constructions of romantic love, but socialists emphasized that free love could only be guaranteed when we secured by the *economic* independence of all people through socialism. But that did not mean that everyone had to wait. Though the ideal may not be *universally* realized until after the revolution, "for themselves and those sufficiently 'advanced' they think it perfectly safe to try free love now" (Bliss 485). The Greenwich Village intellectuals seem to have identified themselves as this romantic vanguard.

Though more progressive in many ways, feminist socialism was not without its drawbacks or oversights. Just as early free lovers in the U.S. cited spiritual justifications for their practices, the new generation of socialists often turned to social scientific discourses for legitimation. The "prophets of modern love" appealed to were almost exclusively men: Havelock Ellis, Edward Carpenter, August Bebel, Richard von Krafft-Ebbing, Freud, etc. These scientific authorities often promoted classist and racist eugenic justifications for sexual freedom. They also tended to emphasize sexual difference, reinforcing "old sexual hierarchies…within an egalitarian framework" as men took the authority to generate new sexual protocols for women (Stansell 227). The Greenwich Village milieu paradoxically, "elaborated on, painted in, affirmed, and obsessively detailed the distinct properties of women while at the same time insisting that such distinctions were irrelevant to a human sex in the

254 This definition (as "love supreme…unfettered by any tie whatsoever") is referred to as the "free-love theory par excellence" in a 1909 *Encyclopedia of Social Reform* edited by American Christian Socialist William D.P. Bliss (485).

making" (Stansell 233), revealing tensions between their sex and class consciousness, social scientific and political imaginaries.[255]

The obsessive attention given to sexuality moreover was accompanied by a rigorous heterosexual imperative. In their enthusiasm for sexual freedom and new women, radicals minimized the effects of existing structural inequalities and ignored domesticity almost entirely, falling short of translating sexual freedom into sexual equality within the home. Lastly, because of long-standing sexual conventions, the consequences culturally and materially of practicing free love were more dire for women than men. Women faced among other things pregnancy, financial hardship, and social ostracization.[256] Given all these oversights, it is not surprising that most novelistic representations of sexually-emancipated new women and free love are authored by men.

D. RADICAL MEN REPRESENTING (NEW) NEW WOMEN

In the 1910s, "Woman, timeless symbol of romanticism, emerged anew as a dynamic symbol for modernism within the Socialist movement. The new intellectuals placed the ideal of a sexually emancipated woman at the center of their cultural aesthetic" (Buhle 262). Socialist authors of both sexes had often depicted New Woman characters before, even placing them at the center of their novels.[257] Indeed, novelist and playwright George Cram Cook's conversion from

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255 "What in retrospect appears so marked a characteristic of American feminism," Christopher Lasch writes, "is its preoccupation with the question of sexual identity. The whole 'woman question,' as it was debated in the United States, turned on the issue not simply of what roles women and men ought respectively to play, but of the respective *nature* of the sexes" (his emp. 56-57).

256 For this reason, there is a well-documented pattern of female free love advocates retreating to social conservatism. American examples include Mary Nichols (who married and converted to Catholicism) and Victoria Woodhull (who fled to the U.K., repudiated her beliefs, and married).

257 For instance, Vida Scudder's Hilda Lathrop in *A Listener in Babel* (1901), I.K. Friedman's Evangeline in *By Bread Alone* (1901), Leroy Scott's Ruth Barton in *The Walking Delegate* (1906), John McMahon's

Nietzschean individualism to socialism is marked in his fiction by the shift from his masterful, imperialist, bullfighting hero in *Roderick Taliaferro* (1903) to his beautiful, caring, and brave revolutionary heroine, Marion Moulton, in *The Chasm* (1911). The wealthy manufacturer's daughter Marion, who is caught in a love triangle with a socialist gardener and a Russian aristocrat that slowly and dramatically resolves itself in favor of the former, seems to be a surrogate for the author himself since through her story, "Cook wrote the conflict present in his own mind" (Tanselle 9). However, the difference with characters such as Bullard's Yetta is not only in authors trying to represent women as sexual beings but also that sex itself is seen as integral to their political and personal development; sex and love themselves are politics instead of just symbolic of them.

This transition is seen in socialist bildungsromans of the 1910s written by authors such as Arthur Bullard, Ernest Poole, Elias Tobenkin, and Upton Sinclair in which sexual development plays a key part in the personal and political formation of their characters.[258] Other novels had discussed romantic development, but novels of the new generation reflected the emerging cultural investment in psychoanalysis and sexology—for instance, tracing their characters' personalities to sexually-charged moments in their childhood (for Sinclair's Corydon of *Love's Pilgrimage* (1911), seeing a dirty word written on a fence, for Billy of Poole's *The Harbor* (1915), spying on a prostitute in red garters bouncing on a sailor's lap).

Madeline Tenney and Sonia Sofrosky in *Toilers and Idlers* (1907), Theresa Malkiel's Mary in *The Diary of a Shirtwaist Striker* (1910), and James Oppenheim's Sally Heffer in *The Nine-Tenths* (1911) to name a few.

258 There are some previous novels that reference sexual development but only with reference to sex education, which was either bestowed upon characters to their signal advantage (ensuring a normal healthy sexuality) or withheld to their grave detriment (ensuring perversity). In the case of these novels, sexual development is more personal and tied to individual complexes.

And yet, novels still tended to be more socially conservative than other forms of literary expression. While sex talk and free love were discussed in certain radical magazines (which were constantly being censored), in scores of letters, and in Bohemian theater (such as that of the Liberal Club and Provincetown Players), novels were more guarded in their treatment of sex and its emancipation. The comparative conservatism of novels is likely due to their being marketed to mainstream audiences. Authors opted to make their politics more palatable to readers and editors by presenting them as compatible with existing sexual norms. Following suit with a "boring-from-within" strategy that I have elsewhere suggested seemed to apply not only to working within established unions but also within established social/literary conventions, socialist novelists were often bolder about defying sexual norms in their private lives than they were in their popular novels. Jack London had an "open marriage," but never depicts one in his fiction; Vida Scudder and Florence Converse were lesbians but limit their representations of female sexuality to abstinence or heterosexual monogamy. Fellow socialists and writers Susan Glaspell and George Cram Cook were having an extramarital affair when they both were writing novels about socialists involving very conventional marriage plots.[259]

259 In Glaspell's only novel about socialism, *The Visioning* (1911), she has both her heroine and the working-class chorus girl that she "saved" marry their radical male mentors in the end. By contrast, Glaspell's novels written just before and after *The Visioning*, *The Glory of the Conquered* (1909) and *Fidelity* (1915) pointedly conclude with their heroines finding purpose, self expression, and social emancipation in themselves rather than in marriage—in the case of *Glory*, because her husband dies leaving her to pursue a career in writing, and in *Fidelity*, because she never marries. Neither of these novels mention socialism, so it is interesting that she reserves her happy marriages and conventional romances for socialists. This could be a strategy to make socialism more palatable or relate to the relational, collective nature of socialism (versus individualism, the cult of self-fulfillment, etc.). *Fidelity* does feature "free love," as the story revolves around a huge scandal wherein a girl from a leading family (Ruth Holland) runs away with a married man, living with another woman's husband for a dozen years before leaving him to go off to support herself in New York City when they finally are able to marry. The privileged form of "fidelity" in the novel, then, is being true to oneself. Ruth's sexuality is seen as an inexorable desire—she literally cannot resist her married lover (in a strange way empowering because it suggests that she had no choice but to have sex with him). All of Glaspell's novels involve upper-class women who simultaneously discover the "selves" and "reality" they have been comfortably sheltered from their whole lives. Whereas in *The Visioning*, Katie is educated by her male working-class

In the remainder of this chapter, I analyze three novels that are inspired by the radical man's preoccupation with female (sexual) emancipation, a topic that, though treated with varying degrees of self-consciousness, none of them approach with unbridled enthusiasm or idealism. Upton Sinclair's *Love's Pilgrimage* (1911) and Arthur Bullard's *A Man's World* (1912) and *Comrade Yetta* (1913) were all written as Greenwich Village was emerging as a center of intellectual and culture radicalism by men on the fringes of the bohemian milieu. These are the only Progressive-era socialist novels to explicitly discuss or represent free love outside of marriage in halting, but not overwhelmingly negative or dismissive ways. The reservations they express about female sexual equality expose emerging masculine anxieties about "how to be culturally potent at a moment when women seemed to be the bearers of change" (Stansell 270) and reveal lingering sexist discourses embedded in changing understandings of socialism and sexuality. In other words, Sinclair's and Bullard's works evoke and critique both orthodox and feminist socialism.

Culture radicals tended to simply reverse the Puritanical formula to magnify and idealize sex, posing it not just as "mutual pleasure" as the ultimate "avenue of communication," the highly spiritual "communion of souls."[260] By depicting romantic and domestic struggles, these novels demystify and complicate sex and socialism. While Sinclair is more wary of traditional domesticity and ultimately endorses free love and Bullard is more wary of free love and ultimately endorses domesticity, both initiate literary conversations about sexual

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lover, in *Fidelity*, Ruth has an unhappily-married female working-class mentor who teaches her how to live for herself.

260 See Christopher Lasch's chapter on "Sex as Politics" (pgs. 104-140) in *The New Radicalism in America*, e.g., "By insisting that sex was in fact the highest form of love, the highest form of human discourse, the modern prophets of sex did not so much undermine the prudery against which they appeared to be in rebellion (itself a comparatively recent development) as invert it. In effect, they took the position that sex, far from being 'dirty,' was more 'spiritual' than the spirit itself, having its ultimate sanction in the communion of souls which sex alone, it was now thought, could provide" (109).

representation and expression. In doing so, they vividly illustrate how imagining women's sexual desire (problematic though it may be) is key to reimagining socialism in more dialectical terms and as a spontaneous, contingent, ongoing, embodied process. Their engagement with sexual modernism is both a concrete part of as well as figure for political theories, commitments, and strategies. Sex becomes the working limit of ideology as well as a site for negotiating among and articulating new ones. All based around failed romance, love and sex become the primary sites in these novels for negotiating between the ideals and reality of political and culture radicalism, putting into question the forms of masculine authority that undergird both. Thus, they voice, challenge, and complicate both dominant and emergent discourses related to sexuality and socialism, depicting characters that depart from popular and radical literary traditions.

i. Love's Pilgrimage

Though *Love's Pilgrimage* has received more attention from biographers than scholars in recent years, [261] at the time it was published, it was one of Sinclair's best-reviewed works, with the critical consensus being that, "this book, with all its defects, is one of the most significant of contemporary American novels."[262] It was popular abroad and would probably would have more popular in the U.S. if it were not for its publication corresponding to the author's scandalous divorce from his first wife, Meta Fuller, which was seen as a publicity stunt.[263]

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261 My sense is that the novels that comprise the Sinclair canon tend to be those most directly associated with the working class (particularly men) and labor struggles, which tends to obscure his investment in feminism and the domestic as another site of resistance to capitalism.

262 From review in *Current Literature*, Vol. 51 (1911): 108.

263 In his *Autobiography*, Sinclair claims that it was selling about a thousand copies a week until news of his divorce hit, and then the number dropped to one hundred in a year, prompting his publisher to write, "If people can read about you for two cents, they are not going to pay a dollar and a half to do it" (176). American courts were reluctant to grant Meta and Upton a divorce, perhaps because they used the trials

Though their names are fictionalized to be Thyrsis and Corydon respectively, his relationship with Meta is the subject of the lengthy, closely autobiographical novel. Written just before she left him for poet Harry Kemp (an affair that Meta wrote to Upton symbolized "the rightness of free love"), the highly confessional narrative documents the many trials of their marriage—doing their best to raise a child in poverty through all sorts of physical, emotional, and spiritual suffering. The story of their domestic life overlaps with Thyrsis's attempts to succeed as an artist, and, to this end, the text also supplies lengthy, humorous synopses of his many underappreciated works and includes manuscripts never-before-in-print for lack of a willing publisher. These personal and professional disappointments ultimately set the stage for the couple's political conversion; by the end, both are committed feminists and socialists.

The critical tendency is to downplay the socialist elements of the novel and to see it as less political in general that most of Sinclair's other work, which suggests the hesitancy to read the private and domestic as political. Even though socialism still plays a huge, explicit role in the narrative—one might argue even more so than in *The Jungle*, which only takes an abrupt turn towards it in the end—there is little reference to "official politics," concluding with an intimate conversation between husband and wife rather than a stump speech on election night. There is also a critical tendency to question or downplay the feminist element of the novel, especially since from our contemporary horizon of expectations, the novel's sex radicalism seems conservative at best and deeply misogynistic at worst because of its many problematic gender stereotypes[264] and the overall metaphor of the book, which poses marriage as a trap.[265]

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to stump for socialism, so he eventually had to go to Denmark (with Mary Craig already in tow) to have the separation officially granted.

264 For instance, Corydon is emotional, impulsive, and passionate while Thyrsis is intellectual, rational, and objective.

Instead, most contemporary reviewers identified the major theme and value of *Love's Pilgrimage* as being the age-old "conflict between genius and love."[266] However, the novel's focus on conceptions of art, genius, and love cannot be detached from its political concerns. Sinclair himself pushed for a feminist reading of the novel, opening with the inscription: "To those who throughout the world are fighting for the emancipation of woman I dedicate this woman's book." While it might come off as unforgivably naïve to call a male kunstlerroman a "woman's book," in doing so, he asks readers to consider the novel's artistic and political concerns as mutually-informing instead of mutually-exclusive. Indeed, family life tests and compromises Thyrsis's status as an autonomous artist. His view of genius is affiliated with the classic, romantic artist—that is, the masculinist Byronic hero who is a loner individual. His concerns as an artist are associated with the stuff of the soul, utopian idealism detached from the material world. The struggle, then, between genius and love can be understood as struggle between bourgeois/romantic and feminist-socialist/modern values: individualism versus collectivism, idealism versus materialism.

Many of the early products of Thyrsis's genius are appropriately enough about Love but not of the romantic variety. Instead the heroes of his writings promote the great, bodiless, impersonal, other-worldly Love that inspires true art. From the beginning, this static ideal

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265 Each chapter title refers back to the metaphor of entrapment. The first part is called, "Love's Entanglement" and the second, "Love's Captivity." Each part is broken down into chapters with melodramatic titles, such as "The Victim," "The Snare," "The Cords are Tightened," "The Captive Bound," etc. By the end of the novel, it becomes clear that the "masters of the trap" are capitalists and the socioeconomic system in general, which Thyrsis repeatedly refers to as "the economic screw."

266 Review in *Current Literature*, Vol. 51 (1911): 107. An explicit example from the text of this struggle: "dearly as he loved the child, the artist in him cried out against these ties…When one had a wife and child one no longer enjoyed tragedies—one lived them" (372).

humorously contrasts with the daily trials of his personal, embodied love with Corydon.[267] Their love, far from being the constant of bourgeois true love or the absolute of divine, impersonal love, is a constant ongoing struggle. As one reviewer aptly noted, "A single love, as it is pictured for us in 'Love's Pilgrimage,' becomes an endless succession of achievements."[268] Time and again, they must remind themselves to "keep up the fight" so that "nothing may dim their vision of each other" (324). Thus, in thematizing the gap between idealistic visions and reality, the novel serves to temper millennial expectations associated both with socialism and true love. Ultimately, Thyrsis's politics are more influenced by his ambivalent, embodied experience of love than his early artistic ideal of Love.

Sinclair's "appallingly detailed" account of his domestic life can be seen as a response to the rhetorical strategies of both the old-guard and feminist authors in the SP. Many Progressive-era socialist novels (such as those discussed in Chapter One) ended with utopian marriages—symbolic unions that anticipate the cooperative commonwealth, but pointedly neglect to depict the reality of these heroic couples' ensuing domestic life or the trials of realizing the potential of their ideal unions. Thyrsis in fact makes fun of such novels wherein the naive "solution" to the "problem of capital and labor" "seemed to be for the handsome young leader of the union to marry the daughter of the capitalist" (421). Like *The Jungle*, *Love's Pilgrimage* opens with the wedding and the rest is spent scrutinizing the aftermath wherein "[their] experiences…had been calculated to destroy their illusions as to several kinds of romance" (619).

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267 Sinclair acknowledges this gap with gentle self-deprecation and lament. For instance, "it was all very picturesque to portray one's hero as dying of disease; but in reality it was not all that satisfactory" (340), and, when building a house in the country, "These, perhaps, were prosaic considerations, and not of the sort which Thyrsis had been accustomed to associate with spring-time. But this he hardly realized—so rapidly was the discipline of domesticity bringing his haughty spirit to terms!" (524).

268 B. Russell Herts in *The Book News Monthly*.

Similarly, Stansell points out how "the effusive rhetoric" of feminists often obscured "the truth of everyday life," and the truth was that "the celebration of equality did not reach into the home" (251, 258). Thus, "emancipated" women tried to side-step the mundane, traditional domestic and, when they could not, tended to keep the difficulties associated with housekeeping and child-rearing concealed.[269] Such silences reinforced the long historical occlusion of the domestic from the official politics of the SP. In this light, Sinclair's excessive and frank representation of the domestic space illuminates the limitations of both movements' politics.

Corydon, who is "sensitive to external things," repeatedly forces Thyrsis to recalibrate his perspective, since Thyrsis eventually realizes that it is "obvious that the mere physical proximity of another person kept one's attention upon external things" (158). Their marriage forces him out of artistic detachment to face material realities and demand social engagement. It becomes a site in which feminist-socialist ideals and realities, theories and practices are negotiated. Notably, their marriage starts out as an ideal union forged on feminist lines,[270] but their "vision" is almost instantly compromised by domestic and material concerns. Invoking the idyllic image of men and women working together, merging their private and professional lives, Thyrsis insists that their marriage will be guided by "their common love for something higher" (61) and Corydon writes, "we must not think of each other in any way but as co-workers in a great labor" (84). They live up to this ideal in the first days of their marriage as

269 "The assertion of an older pattern of men's privileges and women's subordination was a result of the lack of attention radicals gave to domestic life and the constant—one could say compulsive—attention accorded to heterosexuality" (Stansell 262).

270 The young couple thinks of marriage as a "slave custom," but before they go through the ceremony, they agree that neither of them would dream of staying in the marriage, "a moment after love had ceased" (142). Accordingly, they make up their own vows, the script of which runs: "I take thee to be the companion of my soul. I give myself to thee freely, for the sake of love, and I will stay so long as thy soul is better with me than without. But if ever this should cease to be, I will leave thee; for if my soul is weaker than thine, I have no right to be thy mate" (143).

they spend all of their time painstakingly learning to read heady German novels and practicing Haydn's and Mozart's sonatas as a couple, which was "the nearest they could ever come to creative achievement together" (155).

Two things disrupt their idyllic union and lead to romantic disillusionment: first, Corydon loses her small inheritance after her lawyer gambles it away with risky investments, leaving her economically dependent upon Thyrsis, and second, Corydon becomes pregnant, leaving her with the burden of childcare. Their creative and intellectual partnership dissolves as their relationship becomes "sexuoeconomic."[271] Corydon rightly anticipates that having a child means giving up their "last hope" of working and "growing together" (244). Their home illustrates how quickly sexual inequalities can reassert themselves under the pressure of economic conditions. And having sex, far from being an expression of freedom, keeps them both in "slavery" as long as they are at the mercy of the "economic screw." Mirroring the cut-throat capitalist system to which they are subjected, their marriage becomes "the licensed preying of one personality upon another" (604). The main drama of the novel, then, is the difficulties generated by striving for to achieve gender equality given the socioeconomic asymmetries of their specific relationship and general environment. It is a complex dramatization of the tensions between class and sex consciousnesses, between political convictions, cultural mores, and economic conditions. Ultimately, while they are unable to resolve their conflict and conclude that there need to be broader structural changes in order to

271 This term is taken from the work of Charlotte Perkins Gilman, who was a major influence on Sinclair. In *Women and Economics* (1898), she discusses how humans are the only species who have a sexuoeconomic relationship between males and females—that is, women's lives are dependent upon their sex function. For a discussion of Gilman's influence on and friendship with Sinclair (including her input on *Love's Pilgrimage*), see Mark van Wienen's chapter on "The Feminism of American Socialism" (pp. 100-126) in his book, *American Socialist Triptych* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012).

do so, their own experiences and interpretation of their traumatic domestic life helps to articulate a more dialectical version of socialism.

In line with a new feminist-socialism, the text makes many explicit efforts to suggest the dialectical relationship between gender and class. Thyrsis's first attempts at a class analysis of society are inseparable from gender critique as they relate to the philandering of one of his rich classmates, "a young savage turned loose to prey in a civilized community" (28). He notes that the man only takes advantage of working-class women and "had the most supreme contempt for his victims—that was what they were made for, and he paid them their price. Nor was this just because they were women, it was a matter of *class*; the young man had a mother and sisters, to whom he applied quite other standards" (28). Eventually, he makes overt connections between women and the working class, such as, "it was interesting to note how one might trace the enslavement of woman, step by step with the enslavement of labor; the two things went hand in hand, and stood or fell together" (562). Ultimately, his political commitment is articulated in dialectical terms: "So, Thyrsis perceived the two great causes in which the progress of humanity was bound up—the emancipation of labor and the emancipation of woman; to educate and agitate and organize for which became the one service that was worth while in life" (563).[272]

Thyrsis's marriage helps enact this proto-feminist-socialist perspective. Seeing Corydon's "moments of genius" "formed his idea of woman," that is,

> To him woman was an equal; and this he not only said with his lips, he lived it in his feelings. The time came when he went out into the world, and learned to understand the world's idea, that woman meant vanity and pettiness and

272 Sinclair himself had articulated such a perspective as early as 1907, when in *The Industrial Republic: A Study of the American Ten Years Hence*, he claimed, "the socialist battle is the battle of woman, even more than it is the battle of the workingman" (234).

> frivolity; but Thyrsis let all this pass, knowing the woman-soul. Somewhere underneath, not yet understood and mastered, was pent this mighty force that in the end would revolutionize all human ideas and institutions. Here was faith, here was vision, here was the power of all powers; and how was it to be delivered and made conscious, and brought in the service of life? (498)

This passage resonates with feminist analyses popularized by Lester Ward and Charlotte Perkins Gilman that suggest women, though innately superior, have been evolutionarily crippled by their economic dependence.[273] It both insists upon women's equality and reinscribes their difference along pre-existing gendered lines as a passionate, unconscious force. Women are positively identified as being a potentially revolutionary class who are figured within the "sleeping giant" trope typically used to describe the proletariat. In other words, they must be woken up, "understood and mastered" by a vanguard (presumably men like Sinclair).

This problematic discourse is anticipated in the novel by the melodramatic "love letters" that Thyrsis and Corydon send each other before they are married. In this epistolary exchange, Thyrsis foregrounds his desire to transform the inexperienced, uneducated, ladylike Corydon into a New Woman. He repeatedly insists that his enthusiasm for their relationship consists in his ability to have complete control over her development since now she is nothing but a comatose "doll" that he needs to teach and awaken (e.g. 103). He wants to be her "conscience" (96) and to shape her "undeveloped soul" (97). He confesses to Corydon that he is "drunk with the thought of *making* a woman to love" (110) and that he thinks about her as part of his "work," part of the "raw material" he "had to use" (113). He dreams, "that I had mastered you, and was going to make you what you had to be" (113), declares that, "I love you because you

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273 Lester Ward was a pioneering American sociologist who was famous for his "gynocentric" anthropological accounts of early human civilization, influencing many feminist thinkers of the era including Gilman. While his full theory of gynocentric society (in which women were the stable constituents of the race and men were merely an evolutionary strategy for the sake of sexual variation) was not published until *Pure Sociology* in 1903, he introduced these ideas in articles much earlier. See for instance, "Our Better Halves," in *Forum* 6 (Nov. 1888), 266-275.

are something upon which I may exert the force of my will" (116), and promises that, "I shall make you a perfect woman or else kill you" (117). The "perfect woman" for Thyrsis is one made in his own image. He demands an artistic, spiritual, and intellectual equal, capable of the same degree of self-control, self-discipline, and self-sacrifice for a lofty ideal of constant "progress and growth." Here, the radical male's preoccupation with New Women is explicitly connected with masculine domination.

If we are disturbed by this unambiguously violent trope of masculine domination and Corydon's demur response to it ("I bow in joy before your will, your certainty, your power"), there is some satisfaction in seeing how quickly his aspirations for both of them crumble until Thyrsis must begrudgingly admit in the end that "her temperament was his law, and her needs were his standards; and day by day he must become more like her, and less like himself" (511). Moreover, it is likely that Sinclair was at least in part aware of the troubling nature of his early attitude towards Meta. As Sinclair scholar William Bloodsworth suggests, the novel is a vehicle for self-critique, "an expose, with perhaps some contritional exaggerations, of disturbing tendencies in Sinclair's own personality" (74). Just as the novel problematizes Thyrsis's "idealism," it also repeatedly puts this kind of patriarchal authority into question. Upon the publication of *Love's Pilgrimage*, Floyd Dell and George Herron gently chided Sinclair that clearly he did not understand women (implying they did), and while they have a point, his extensive display of his ongoing attempts and failures to understand women are perhaps the most feminist feature of the work. [274]

274 *Love's Pilgrimage* could be considered a muckraking of his own personal life that exposes institutionalized and cultural forms of patriarchy imbedded in his psyche. While other radical male authors tried to do the same, their pretense of "knowing" women only served to reinforce their masculine authority. For instance, Hutchins Hapgood wrote the autobiographical novel *Story of a Lover* about his relationship with his wife, Neith Boyce, in 1919 that Stansell locates as part of a "long-lasting tradition of male complaint founded on psychological wounds rather than political objections" from "the

For instance, Sinclair contrasts Thyrsis's reactionary attitude towards female sexuality with Corydon's healthy one. At first Corydon is a Victorian ideal of female sexuality in his mind—"all devotion and love, and pure, pure maiden goodness!" (116). Immediately following their first sexual encounter, Thyrsis's perspective quickly switches to the other extreme. In imagery that evokes exoticism and predation, he wonders, "Could this be Corydon, the gentle and shrinking? No, she was gone; and in her stead this creature of desire—tumultuous and abandoned! She was like some passion-goddess out of the East, shameless and terrible and destroying! She was like a tigress of the jungle, calling in the night for its mate" (197). However, the novel suggests that it is primarily his psychological baggage, not just her sexuality that is the problem. Inverting the typical discourse of men as coherent subjects and women as fragmented, Sinclair acknowledges that, "In most of these things [related to love] she was his teacher. For Corydon was one person, in body, mind and soul; in her there was no disharmonies, no warring elements" (202). While for Corydon sex is an expression of her wholeness, for Thyrsis it exposes how he is divided against himself: "It could never seem to him the utterly natural thing—there was always a fear of pollution, a hint of satiety, a thrill of shame" (204).[275]

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man of feminist principles [who] nods toward the female voice at the same time he suppresses it" through his "obliteration of the heroine's subjectivity in the name of the narrator's superior powers to elucidate her character, analyze her dilemmas, and criticize her" (Stansell 304-306). In other words, perhaps Sinclair's adhering to his own perspective and not presuming to know Meta's for the majority of the narrative is precisely what makes this a "woman's book."

275 While Thyrsis's ambivalence towards sex is never resolved in the novel, Sinclair wrote his play *The Naturewoman* in the same year that dramatizes the transition in his thought, valorizing sex as a natural, truthful, and eugenic. The heroic title character in the play, Oceana, is also based on Meta. Raised by her social scientist father on an island in the South Seas, she is a beautiful unaffected virginal woman brimming with "a continual overflow of animal health" (12) who chooses her mate (an unhappily married man) in a Boston parlor by inspecting his eyes and tongue (45). Her chosen mate, Henry, seems to be a surrogate for Sinclair—he has the potential for human greatness, but his sentimental bourgeois upbringing has too tight a grip on his consciousness for a clean break to sexual modernity with Oceana. Whereas "Nature" often comes off as the bad guy in *Love's Pilgrimage*, "Civilization"—particularly as represented by a couple stuffy society ladies—is the undisputed villain of the play. Sinclair's

Likewise, their marriage time and again violently refutes the wisdom of established masculine authorities on women, their needs, and their bodies. In particular, the narrative questions scientific and medical understandings of women. For instance, his doctor assures him that having a baby will solve Corydon's "neuroses" when in fact motherhood only multiplies them. Humorously, Thyrsis assumes that having a child might actually free him from domestic considerations rather than making him more deeply entrenched in the affairs of his household. His logic behind not aborting their child is to "Let Corydon have her baby—and then he might have his books!" (226). As it turns out, this is not a viable solution. Corydon is not satisfied by the narrow confines of motherhood, nor does it immunize her from "hysteria and extravagance and sentimentalism and all the rest of the ills of the hour," as their doctor promises (211). Instead, she is drawn more deeply into mental illness to the point of attempted suicide while Thyrsis is forced fill in as a "nursemaid" and "mother's helper" (495). Thus, the novel challenges motherhood as the instinct or "business of women," questioning it as the natural or primary means for female self-fulfillment. Corydon sometimes has "a perfectly definite impulse

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introduction to the text strongly suggests that he no longer considers "animal intimacy" to be on a debauched "lower plane." In the preface, Sinclair mentions that George Bernard Shaw critiqued the play, saying, "Of course, plenty of dramatic and literary faculty has gone to the making of it, but Sinclair is a traitor to civilization, and his main thesis, which is that woman with the habits and ideas of a porpoise is superior to a woman with the habits and ideas of Madame Roland, will not wash." To this Sinclair responds,

> that 'The Naturewoman' represents a definite reaction in my attitude to life. For the first fifteen years of my independent intellectual existence, I was a disciple of the ideal of 'spirituality'; I sought the things of the mind and 'soul' exclusively—until suddenly I awakened to a realization of the fact that I had lost the power of digesting food. Now I have come to the conviction that it is better to have 'the habits and ideas of a porpoise'—with a porpoise's digestion—than it is to have the 'habits and ideas of Madame Roland'—plus the headaches and backaches which most of the Madame Rolands of my knowledge are obliged to contend with. (vi)

His acceptance and privileging of the bodily and the sexual corresponds with adopting the materialist perspective of socialists as he does by the end of the novel.

of hatred" towards her baby and questions whether motherhood could be considered "life" (463). She feels "utterly unfitted for the roles [she] labor[s] to play," of wife and mother and hopes that there are "other things that women can do in the world besides training children" (596). Ultimately, the little solace she finds is in artistic and sexual expression, but not motherhood.

While Thyrsis and Corydon's marriage smashes so many theories and ideals, it also helps articulate new ones, specifically: free love. If Sinclair opens by referring to it as a "woman's book," he is calling it a "book of free love" by the end, linking women's and sexual emancipation. The last pages anticipate the writing of the novel with the couple tossing around possible names. In keeping with the spiritual connotations of the title, Corydon calls the text a "Bible for lovers" and Thyrsis says he will name it "Love's Deliverance," suggesting love's salvation or emancipation from corruption (663). Corydon worries that the novel will be discredited as a book of "free love," and Thyrsis agrees but concludes it is a term that needs to be reappropriated: "Let us redeem our great words from base uses. Let that no longer call itself Love, which knows that it is not free" (663). While the narrative only begins to explore how this ideal involves allowing his wife to follow her own sexual prerogative, it does imply that Thyrsis is willing to let her pursue other love interests and that she acts on her freedom in the next five years of their marriage.[276]

276 Sinclair in fact intended to tell the story of their open marriage and its dissolution. He wrote a racier sequel, *Love's Progress*, which was more radical than the first in picturing a "new morality" characterized by free love and included scenes describing his own extramarital affairs, but he could not find a publisher for it at the time and must have had second thoughts about doing so later. In the book's preface he wrote that the intent of *Love's Progress* was to "illustrate the new attitude toward love and marriage, in which the equal rights of both parties to experiment and self-discovery are recognized" (quoted in Arthur 96). The manuscript is still available at the Lilly Library in Upton Sinclair's personal archives, but cannot be discussed without permission from his estate.

Like socialism, free love is not the ideal assumed but rather the one arrived at after lengthy intellectual and personal struggle—and the two are integrally connected. This turn to free love corresponds with Thyrsis's political commitment to socialism. In fact, it is framed as Thyrsis's first attempt to translate political theory into action. Reflecting the dialectical perspective of feminist-socialism, their marriage becomes the first site of "praxis." Faced with the possibility of losing Corydon to another man who loves her, he reflects, "Now it seemed as if the time had come for him to prove that he meant what he had said—that he was willing to stand by his vision and act upon it" (644). Consequently, he encourages Corydon and her admirer to continue exploring their love for one another and act upon it according to their volition. This "free love" experiment works in the sense that it transforms their marriage (marking "love's progress"), but it fails in the sense that Corydon's lover does not live up to their principle. Indeed, the other man is so horrified by the prospect of acting upon his desire for a married woman that he leaves his job and moves to Europe, suggesting that there would need to be broader structural changes (like socialism) in order to make the ideal a practicable reality. In itself, then, free love is not a solution, but it is part of the strategy for social change that will help the world "grow up" (661).

Love's Pilgrimage evinces understandings of artistry, sexuality, and socialism that are relational and in transition. Though still tentative in its articulations, Sinclair begins explicating a more dialectical understanding of the relationship between sexuality and socialism, gender and class. At the same time, he reveals how this new radical position was still liable to reproduce sexual and class hierarchies. Ultimately, the novel puts the radical male artist's investment in Woman and female emancipation on display in progressive and problematic ways, showcasing and questioning the types of masculine authority that underlie discourses of authorship, feminism, and socialism.

ii. *A Man's World*

While no one seems to have taken *Love's Pilgrimage* too seriously for its advocacy of free love, Arthur Bullard's *A Man's World* (1912) has been touted as the sole example of a socialist novel from the Progressive era that depicts free love without condemning it, and thus has been posed as emblematic of the new generation of feminist socialists. Indeed, Bullard (1879 – 1929) was a New York intellectual at the fringes of the Greenwich Village milieu. He was a contributor to Eastman's *The Masses* and worked as a writer at the socialist weekly, *The New York Call*, which gave birth-control activist Margaret Sanger her start with the column "What Every Woman Should Know" before Comstock made her famous by censoring it.[277] In addition to his reporting work, he published a number of commercially and critically successful novels under the penname Albert Edwards and was close friends with socialist authors Ernest Poole and Leroy Scott who he met at the University Settlement.

However, in spite of his critical and biographical associations with feminism, his novels remain tentative in their exploration of (women's) sexual emancipation and equality. On the other hand, as with *Love's Pilgrimage*, *A Man's World* seems to be self-consciously exploring the limitations of its protagonist's masculine perspective. While Sinclair refers to *Love's Pilgrimage* as a "woman's book," even though it is primarily about himself, Arthur Bullard foregrounded his interest in changing constructions of masculinity in *A Man's World*. Both of these novels reflect how radical men's interest in feminism and female sexual emancipation also serves to put masculinity into question, especially since men "faced the question of how to be culturally potent at a moment when women seemed to be the bearers of change" (Stansell 270).

277 Bullard is best known in his capacities as a war correspondent and statesman during WWI and its aftermath. He was the head of the Russian Division of the State Department in Russia though his associations with socialism gave the U.S. government pause. Along with Walter Lippmann, he founded the Committee on Public Information.

Also akin to *Love's Pilgrimage*, *A Man's World* is semi-autobiographical. The novel is written as the first-person memoirs of Arnold Whitman, a character loosely based on Bullard himself. Arnold starts his life under the iron rule of his uncle and adoptive father, a dogmatic Tennessee preacher. After the college-educated Arnold swears off Christianity, he is estranged from his unloving family and decides to pursue a scholarly career archiving Old English manuscripts until an illness that renders him temporarily blind forces him to reevaluate his life. He decides to leave behind his erudite seclusion and embark on a socially-engaged career as a county detective/criminologist who helps prove the innocence of penniless prisoners and reform the corrupt penal system.[278]

The narrative also involves many romantic plotlines. Arnold has a fiancée who he knew from childhood, but their engagement is broken when he leaves the Church and his hometown behind. When he goes blind, the woman who nurses him back to sight falls in love with him. A brilliant young anarchist and aspiring bacteriologist, Ann Barton refuses to marry him but continues to love him as she successfully pursues her professional ambitions to France and back. Arnold moves into a settlement house and then into a home with his friend Norman Beason, a wealthy and irreverent reformer who works in advertising. Norman marries a spirited, Italian, working-class prostitute, Nina, with whom he has two children before dying. After a failed romance with the socialist woman of his dreams in Europe, Arnold retires to his old New York apartments and settles into a lifelong free-love partnership with Ann, helping to raise both Norman's daughter and son and Ann's orphaned nephew as his own children.

278 Bullard also worked as a "probation officer" (which was a newly-created position) in The Tombs after dropping out of college. He published several essays on criminology before moving on to his career in journalism.

Bullard's representation of Ann, then, is the source of many claims about his revolutionary feminism. Mari Jo Buhle claims that the "new intellectual novelists [of the SP] made the sexually emancipated woman the subject of moral revolution," and "Arthur Bullard…was the outstanding example" (264). Walter Rideout is more accurate in saying that Bullard provides the *only* example of a socialist novel bold enough to feature "a man and woman [who] live together without benefit of clergy and with the full approval of the author" (Rideout 74). Critics such as Rideout and Buhle overlook the many qualifications and complications to such claims that exist in the novel's cautious representation of free love and its relationship to feminist-socialism.

Though Bullard himself was a socialist, *A Man's World* is told from the point of view of a man who is never quite able to commit to the Party though he sympathizes with the cause.[279] The socialist characters in the text are for the most part depicted as static and doctrinaire, and their talk of revolution alternately bores Arnold and offends his refined sensibilities. Moreover, Arnold's "free love" relationship is with Ann who is an anarchist—and hence free love is still really only "for anarchists" (Rideout 74). He tries to escape what to him is never an entirely satisfactory romantic arrangement by first proposing to Ann even though he isn't passionately in love with her (she refuses because she loves him and won't sin against her political convictions) and then by proposing to a gorgeous red-headed socialist lawyer, Suzanne Martin, with whom he is head-over-heels in love (she refuses because she does not love him and won't be with a man who doesn't share her political convictions). Mark Pittenger astutely comments,

279 In his review of *A Man's World* in *The Coming Nation* (Vol VI, no. 66, Dec. 1912, pg. 11), Floyd Dell suggests that "it is all the more effective for its being from the 'reform' point of view," because, "the spectacle of a man who can see no further than reform being pushed back and back by the Socialists, until he is practically ready to surrender, is more interesting than would have been the spectacle of a man who had already arrived at the Socialist position. One is suggestive and dynamic, the other static and juiceless." Dell also notes that writing from this perspective allows Bullard to make some necessary criticisms of Socialists.

then, that, "What makes Arnold Whitman's free-love relationship with Ann Barton believable is his lifelong ambivalence about it; he never resolves the tension between his genuine love for Ann and his inability to repress fully the legacy of a long-rejected religious upbringing" (214).

Furthermore, *A Man's World* is by no means as racy as comparable books, such as Hutchins Hapgood's *An Anarchist Woman* (1909),[280] which details the life story of a working-class girl, Marie, who has a huge number of reckless affairs (that ruin her health and reputation) in addition to living in an open relationship with a man out of wedlock. Sensuality is posed as Marie's primary mode of self-expression. Hapgood paints a picture of a salon that is intellectually and sexually exploratory, even describing "orgies" held in honor of such radical dignitaries as Emma Goldman and Big Bill Haywood. By contrast, Bullard's Ann is essentially monogamous, and it is implied that all women are naturally so.[281] Ann's objections to marriage are related to it as a legal institution connected to private property and to the custom of a woman prioritizing her family over her career. She is not challenging the sexual boundaries of marriage: that is, the confines of a monogamous, heterosexual relation.

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280 *An Anarchist Woman* is comprised of many letters written by the two main characters, Marie and Terry, that are mediated and arranged by a narrator identified as the author himself. Hapgood refers to the text as a "natural history of the anarchist" (though he frequently switches into the mode of psychoanalysis) in his preface, a claim that helped him avoid censorship given the sexually explicit content. While Emma Goldman objected that Marie and Terry were hardly representative types in her review of the book, it seems that the two were supposed to stand for the dangerous extremes of anarchism: Marie as a lifestyle radical (impulsive, sensual, active) and Terry as a radical idealist (sterile, intellectual, alienated).

281 Arnold notes of Ann, "I knew from the first that the love she gave me was for always. It was to be the big human factor in her life, but it was not to be mutual" (80). The belief that women were naturally monogamous (while men were naturally polygamous) seems to have had a lot of traction in the SP and at large, supported by psychologists and social scientists. Engels laid a foundation for interpreting this "natural" phenomenon as an effect of the underlying economic systems in *Origins of Private Property, Family, and the State*—men's sexual freedom even within marriage was used to reinforce their status as owners of property (women) and ensure that the property they amassed went to their true heirs (the only way to verify that their wives' children were theirs was to enforce female monogamy). In spite of this, many American socialists seem to buy into the (likely residual and Victorian) idea that women are physiologically attracted to only one man during their lifetime.

In other words, *A Man's World* is neither a resounding endorsement of sexual freedom nor does it explicitly connect it with socialism, or at least not until the very end of the novel when the topic comes up negatively in conversation with his adopted daughter, Marie. His two eldest adopted children are bright, independent, creative, and committed young socialists. Furthermore, they are romantically attached to each other and inclined towards marriage—since Marie is a suffragette and Billy is a socialist, this suggests a union of socialism and feminism. In one of the last scenes, Arnold asks Marie (who is reading Kautsky in their den) if she believes in free love, to which she promptly replies "Not for a minute" (304).

In her rejection of free love, Marie refers to the radical Ann's sexual ideals as "sort of early Victorian." Ann, she suggests, is an old-fashioned New Woman, because of her "fussing over individual rights" and "trying to be individually free" (305). Marie instead adopts a "modern" point of view, which she explains as being: "Nowadays we think of things socially. It doesn't matter so much whether I'm free, whether I get justice, it's the others—the race—we must work for…We must think not only of the few women, here and there, the giants like Ann, who are strong enough to stand alone, but of all the women—and the children" (305). Thinking "socially" and upholding women's rights for Marie means supporting traditional marriage because, "until we've won freedom and equality and independence, we've got to insist on guarantees," which suggests broader structural changes are necessary to make free love a viable ideal (306). In the meantime, she sees free love as a new site of sexual conflict that merely reiterates women's oppression, or, as she jokes, "just another of your man tricks to get the better of your superiors" (304).

Similar doubts about the practical ramifications of and hidden motivations behind free love were widely expressed among socialists, even of the Bohemian variety. Historian Meredith Tax recounts how "sexual radicalism was often an opportunity for sexual

opportunism" and quotes a 1911 article from Bullard's *The Call* at length: "Certain party members, principally males, either believe or profess to believe that they have 'advanced ideas concerning love and marriage. Reduced to essentials, these theories generally indicate that the men in question do all in their power to escape marriage, but persistently exert every effort to have as many love affairs as possible" (139). Socialist literary critic Floyd Dell wrote an article in *The Masses* that mocked sex radicals who abused the work of Edward Carpenter, Havelock Ellis and "other modern prophets" to seduce women, claiming that their sexual "indulgence brought the world, night by night, a little nearer to freedom and Utopia" (quoted in Tax 140).[282] *A Man's World*, then, draws attention to how feminist socialism might tend towards reconsolidating gender hierarchies.

Though the narrator does not ultimately endorse free love and remains anxious about female sexual emancipation, the novel implies this might be a shortcoming on his part, a failure of the masculine imagination. Framed as an "autobiography," Arnold presents his life as an ethical "experiment" tied up in testing various religious and political belief systems, and the narrative as an interpretation of that experiment. He is never, however, able to formulate a thesis himself, which he confides from the very beginning of his story when he admits that there is a "difference between 'evidence' and 'truth'" and that "at best [he] can only give 'evidence'" (3). Even if he never arrives at a "truth," it is remarkable that sexual situations serve as his primary "evidence" throughout the recounting of his life.

As he was raised in the Church, Christianity is the first master narrative that Arnold disavows. Importantly, Arnold's loss of faith in Christianity is due to sexual hypocrisy, that is, an affair between his cousin Oliver, who is an ordained preacher, and a married woman Mary,

282 Recently, feminists have discussed how "free love" discourses did not emancipate women so much as create new sexual protocols that merely compelled women to say yes instead of no.

who Arnold previously deemed a "goddess." He describes their affair as, "a bolt fell which ended my religious life. Its lurid flame momentarily illumined the great world beyond my knowing…Never since have I been able to believe, religiously, in anything" (27). The adulterous scene Arnold describes highlights the conflict between body and soul, desire and faith. After he witnesses them embrace, he hears Mary warn, " 'It's a sin…you're a minister,'" to which Oliver "fiercely" replies, " 'I'm a *man*,'" before drawing her into a house to presumably have sex (29). While Arnold hates Oliver at first, he later sees him as a tragic figure, realizing that Mary was probably his one love in life. Since being a "man" and acting upon "love" contradict being "a Christian," it seems that Arnold is turned away from religion precisely because the sexual/material and the spiritual/ideal painfully conflict with one another. For the rest of the novel, Arnold tries to reconcile the gap between belief and experience, ideas and bodies, but he is never able to definitely formulate or adopt a new belief system adequate to the unpredictable convolutions of his life. However, following suit with the early "bolt" of Mary and Oliver's affair, sexuality remains the testing grounds for potential belief systems and ideological commitments.

Consequently, each of Arnold's major sexual relationships is loaded with ideological significance. Each woman represents various "faiths" or hermeneutics. His youthful engagement is broken off because of his loss of faith in the Christianity to which his fiancée remains single-mindedly devoted. Ann is associated with anarchism, and Suzanne with orthodox socialism. When Susanne rejects Arnold, it is in part an assertion that romantic love is not deeper than or exclusive from political commitment. Instead, she weds and raises a family with another socialist, enjoying the type of fulfilling and productive marriage to which Arnold aspires. In contrast to Arnold, the radical women in the story are more successful at integrating their lives and beliefs, desires and political commitments. Like Corydon (who

Sinclair asserts is "one" in "body, mind, and spirit"), Ann, Suzanne, and Marie have a wholeness that Arnold lacks.

Ultimately, the novel refuses to generalize about either free love or marriage. Reflecting upon the women he has known, Arnold is reminded of the baffling differences between Ann's and (Norman's wife) Nina's experiences: "They are both good women and yet to one marriage seems a degradation and serfdom, to the other marriage meant escape from the mire, emancipation from the most abysmal slavery…Watching them has helped me understand many of life's endless paradoxes" (294). His meditative conclusions about the contingency of life and intentions are articulated in terms of his sexual relationships:

> Certainly one of the best things in my life has been Ann's love. It came to me without any striving on my part, it has been in no way a reward for effort or aspiration. Step by step it has seemed to me wrong. I do not believe in free love. I cannot justify it any more than I could stealing eggs when I was a boy. It was something I wanted and which I took. Yet I am quite sure it has been good. On the other hand, the time when I strove hardest to reach a higher plane, when I was most anxious to be upright and honorable, those days I spent in France with Suzanne, resulted in the most bitter pain, the most dismal failure of my life. (309)

If women are the primary evidence in his experiments, they ultimately serve to disrupt rather than reinforce Arnold's masculine authority as a privileged interpreter of reality.

Putting his own authority into question, Whitman acknowledges that he "started wrong" but lacks the "elan of youth" to "start the experiment again" (309-310). The ending suggests that the novel could be understood as a tragic non-conversion story since he laments his political agnosticism. The last lines turn towards the next generation of radicals, romanticizing their political commitment: "And how I envy them their faith! /Ave—Juventas—morituri salutamus!" [283] Though his socialist children are facing "this biggest problem of all—

283 The second line is a riff on a Roman soldier's salute to Caesar. It is translates roughly to: "Hail—Youth—we who are about to die salute you!"

this business of love," he takes heart in that "they are not blindfolded as…all [his] generation was…They are steering—not drifting" (312). His hopes are with the next generation of socialists, who he imagines going still further to bridge the gap between bodies and ideas.

iii. *Comrade Yetta*

Bullard's follow-up novel, *Comrade Yetta* (1913) dramatizes not free love but rather something more akin to Marie's "modern view" of love. *Comrade Yetta* is his best known work of fiction, perhaps for its novelty as a portrait of a Jewish, working-class woman. The plot follows a charismatic and beautiful factory worker loosely based on Clara Lemlich who leads a successful strike, gets a job with the Women's Trade Union League, takes up a program of rigorous self-education, and eventually becomes a writer and editor of a socialist weekly, *The Clarion.* Mixed in with the story of Yetta's personal development and a number of labor uprisings in New York are a series of linked romantic plots whose vertices far exceed the typical triangle. Yetta alone is proposed to four times. Yetta's romantic entanglements correspond directly with her political commitments: her class-consciousness is sparked when a cadet nearly tricks her into prostitution; she calls a wildcat strike when her supervisor offends her by proposing;[284] she adopts the syndicalist perspective of a professor with whom she is infatuated; and she re-commits herself to socialism (for the babies) when she marries the head editor of *The Clarion.*[285]

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284 And also winds up becoming a member of the SP when she runs into her old boss begging on the street and realizes that he is just as much a victim of the capitalist system.

285 The entanglement of romantic and political plotlines seems to be a common narrative strategy during the time period, and one hardly exclusive to socialists. Janet Bumpus of *The Dwelling Place of Light* (1917) written by best-selling novelist Winston Churchill offers a telling contemporary foil for Yetta's characterization. Churchill's novel critiques both capitalists and socialists, reflecting a middle-class distrust of both the upper and lower classes. For instance, Janet Bumpus of first takes on a capitalist perspective when she has an affair with her boss, the manager of a mill, and then in her revolt against him for taking advantage of her sexually, she joins a strike. Her interest in radical politics is further enhanced by her attraction for an IWW leader, but she later figures out that he is using her in the same way her boss was. Politics are seen as inviting sexual and moral perversion. In the end, Janet

Accordingly, critics such as Hapke and Cooke have pointed out how this ending effectively "domesticates" the female labor leader and forces her to adopt the "patriarchal values" of her husband.[286] While I agree that there are plenty of problematic gender issues of this nature in Bullard's novels, I think this criticism can be somewhat qualified by reading *A Man's World* and *Comrade Yetta* as companion texts. In the former, a bourgeois man is unable to achieve love and marriage or become a socialist or have children. In the latter, a working-class woman achieves love in marriage, is politically-committed, and procreates. The two protagonists, Arnold and Yetta are remarkably similar in some ways: both are sentimental and romantic and idealistic, but Yetta somehow succeeds where Arnold fails. *Comrade Yetta* is the fantasy projection of what Arnold Whitman could not achieve in *A Man's World*: a romance that fuses love and work, a sexual union that reaffirms political commitment.[287]

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dies quickly after having her illegitimate baby. Despite being proposed to by a very moderate academic who represents social stability, bourgeois values, and political detachment (that is, he represents "the dwelling place of light"), Janet sees herself as unfit for him; her sexuality and body have been tainted by "the modern world" and all her hopes are for her child and the next generation. Thus, the arrival of her child literally detaches her from the world instead of asking her to re-see or re-engage with it.

286 See Laura Hapke's *Labor's Text* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 2001), pp. 151-153, and Sylvia Cooke's *Working Women, Literary Ladies* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008), pp. 236-256. Hapke and Cooke make a good point, validated by the condescending, sexist praise of contemporary reviewers, such as Sinclair Lewis: "Little Yetta is a Jew of Jews, a revolutionist of revolutionists, yet a woman of women; leading her girls in the shirtwaist strike, and loving her Jewish journalist husband like a real woman" in "Relation of the Novel to the Present Social Unrest," *The Bookman*, Vol. 40, (Sept. 1914 – Feb. 1915), pp. 285.

287 Yetta's marital fulfillment is also in striking contrast to fiction written by contemporary "fellow travelers" that explored new women characters in less overtly political contexts, such as Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900) or David Graham Phillips's *The Price She Paid* (1912) and *Susan Lenox* (1917). In these novels, characters such as Carrie Meeber, Mildred Gower, and Susan Lenox represent both "desiring" characters and artist figures. While they all realize their professional potential to varying degrees (Carrie to a moderate extent, and Phillips's heroines to a huge extent), it is suggested that none of them really fulfill their sexual or romantic potential. Carrie—though she is allowed what would be seen as conventionally immoral sexual relationships with Drouet and Hurstwood—is not allowed overt, physical sexual desire; Mildred and Susan are hampered by their romantic inclinations and, though both of them use sex to get ahead, both of them must ultimately forgo it in order to reach the zenith of their success. While Carrie and Susan eventually gain the material conditions deemed

Bullard includes two less agreeable foils for Yetta's successful and productive marriage: free love and abstinence. As is typically the case, free love is reserved for her former might-as-well-be-an-anarchist suitor. Though they eventually marry, Walter has a prolonged affair in Paris with a wealthy divorcee-turned-novelist. When they do tie the knot, they live a childless and sophisticated life on the outskirts of Oxford where he has taken a lucrative academic gig as an expert on the ancient Haktite culture—which so far as I can tell is a completely imaginary field of study, perhaps to stress its utter esoteric irrelevancy. Clearly, his unconventional marriage correlates with his retreat from political life into esoteric scholarly and personal concerns, the kind of which made Arnold Whitman go blind. Walter himself acknowledges that his best chance at "usefulness" is a marriage to Yetta (341).

On the other side of the spectrum is Yetta's wealthy, college-educated boss at the WTUL, Mabel. The lovely Mabel lives with another upper-class woman and persistently rejects all romantic advances from men, including the six-year courtship of Walter who is devastatingly in love with her. Her character evokes the "repressed" women of nineteenth-century and turn-of-the-century political novels, such as the heroines of Elizabeth Stuart Phelps' *The Silent Partner* (1871) or Vida Scudder's *The Listener in Babel* (1903) who willfully sacrifice their romantic aspirations and sexual potentials for the sake of a cause.[288] Bullard makes this position explicit by describing the psychological substitution at work: "What might be called 'the normal mother instinct' had been denied her. Her woman's nature had turned

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necessary for "success," they wind up unhappy and cut off from sexual fulfillment, which points to larger structural and gender oppressions that keep them from achieving their individual and artistic potential.

288 In *The Silent Partner*, the protagonists Perley and Sip both deny proposals from honorable men (Stephen Garrick and Dirk) in order to pursue their reform work. Hilda, Vida Scudder's heroine in *The Listener in Babel*, though she has an early love affair, soon realizes that even a happy marriage could never compensate for her desire for a "union with all humanity, lacking which she perished in sterile isolation" (85).

into an ardent desire to 'mother' the race" (98). However, unlike Scudder's Hilda who willfully denies pursuing sexual fulfillment in spite of some romantic inclinations, Bullard pathologizes this repression and makes it a frustrating but insurmountable obstacle in Mabel's life as opposed to a conscious choice: "in the bottom of her heart Mabel Train knew that something had been neglected by those fairies who had equipped her for life. They had showered many talents upon her. But they had forgotten that little know of nerve cells which had to do with the deeper affections" (90). In an inversion of the typical gendered binary, Mabel is characterized by "cold intellectualism," while Walter is a great "sentimentalist." Mabel is traumatized by the difference: "Although the sight of [Walter] left her quite cold, her eyes filled with tears as they had not done for years. It was just because the sight of him left her cold that tears came" (105). It is implied that her politics are equally pragmatic and unproductive; they lack the spark of "life" that a fully-realized sexuality provides.

However, Yetta's happily wedded love in the novel's conclusion is set not only against free love and abstinence, but also against the traditional romantic love that characterizes the popular "courtship stories" discussed in my first chapter. The difference between the representation of love in the typical socialist marriage plot versus in *Comrade Yetta* is aptly summed up by Marion Moulton of *The Chasm* in her exposition of "the coming way of love," or rather, "the social-democratic way of love": "In the coming way of love there will be no domination, no pedestal, no making and so no breaking of idols, no forming and so no losing of illusions. We shall love truthfully—with *realism*" (my emphasis, 272).[289]

289 Marion delivers this speech to her first husband, a Russian aristocrat, who she accuses of being stuck in the romantic paradigm still regnant in the bourgeois world, that is, the "feudal" mode of love, which involves a "dominator…worshiping a thing of his own making" (271).

E. "THE REALITY OF LOVE"

Bullard addresses the trend in American literature and culture that holds our irrational and prejudicial sexual attractions as being a serious barrier to imagining or bringing about an egalitarian society.[290] Rather than projecting a utopian future in which sexual relations have become transparent to counter this anxiety,[291] Bullard does not deny that individuals have irrational sexual and romantic preferences that are seldom reciprocated or equally-felt. Instead of constructing sexuality in the rationalist, structuralist terms of scientific socialism (or the "(r)evolutionary romances" discussed in Chapter Two), it is depicted as an uneven, contingent and ongoing struggle. Romantic Love is described as "slavery," and in the scheme of the novel, everyone is a slave and a cruel master: Isadore is a slave to Yetta who is a slave to Walter who is a slave to Mabel, etc. Bullard makes the connection between this kind of emotional and sexual struggle with broader political struggles explicit after Yetta's heart is broken by Walter: "Life as she had seen it was a ceaseless, desperate struggle, a constant clash of personalities, an unrelenting war of social classes…But she had always thought of herself as a part of the conflict. Now—and this was her new viewpoint—it seemed that the fight was taking place within her" (347). In the fight to become "Captain of Her Soul," Yetta tries to do the very thing that she committed herself to in the very first speech she gave (a spontaneous speech at the shirtwaist strikers' ball): she "will try not to be a slave" (83-84).

Romantic disillusionment, then, is necessary to becoming a good socialist; one must exit the lofty "palace of dreams" to find concrete reality (and these relations to the world have

290 On the one side of this trend is a novel such as Hawthorne's *Blithedale Romance* and on the other, works by conservative activists like Thomas Dixon, for instance *Comrades*.

291 Transparent sexual relations are a feature of most socialist utopias. Scientific socialists who bought into eugenics also seemed to think that once our sexual relations were unmediated by money and bourgeois culture, "nature" or natural selection would clearly dictate our "mates." I discuss the SP's extremely rationalized projection of "natural" sexuality in Chapter Two.

obvious class and political connotations, a movement between elite/individualistic and working-class/collective modes of being).[292] As the countless victims in the white slave narratives discussed in the last chapter illustrate, challenging the romantic love of bourgeois literature and modern marriage is also crucial to women's avoiding sexual and economic exploitation.[293] Ideologically, the rejection of the romantic resists not only bourgeois aesthetics, but system that is based on individual "success" (very few people can achieve ideal Love just as very few can rise to the top in a capitalist system). Tellingly, it is only in the context of romantic Love that the language of commerce appears (for instance, Arnold and Walter both feel like they are "cheating" their lovers), showing how the seeming ideal is undergirded by a logic of exchange. If the shift to the "reality of love" undermines rationalization of love into an exchange value, it also questions the kind of rationalized social order favored by orthodox socialists. This discourse of Love versus love is a challenge to contemporary socialism. Just as Yetta must "make compromise with the love she dreamed of," socialists must adapt their abstract theories and utopian ideals in accordance with the concrete experiences of life (335).[294]

All of Bullard's main characters experience these episodes of tragic, unrequited Love as a rule, but, instead of souring them on their social efforts, it deepens and nuances their political commitments. For instance, Yetta's lost Love leaves her "defeated" as an "individual," but also

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292Love was seen increasingly as "subversive to the grinding demands of modern life," by virtue of its being outside of or immune to material conditions (Haag 166-7). Failed romances, then, recommit socialists to realism, materialism, and social engagement.

293 Mary of *The House of Bondage* as well as Anna and Grace from *The Rose Door* are easy prey their male captors in part due to the romantic expectations sold to them in popular media—In Mary's case, film; for Anna, fairy tales; and for Grace, poetry.

294 The fact that "sexuality" is the primary arena identified with the "concrete" experiences of life suggests the universalization and normalization of sexuality that was taking place during the Progressive era.

allows her to realize that her individual suffering is not important in the scheme of things (374-375). When she does decide to marry, it is in part out of duty to contribute her labor to the production of the next generation in acknowledgement of the "pain and travail of [the] myriad mothers" who preceded her of "the vast time, the appalling agony, the ceaseless struggle, it has cost Nature to produce [her]" (418).[295] In this manner, sex provides the model for non-alienating labor since Yetta is surprised to find it a joyful expression of her self instead of a burden or duty.[296]

Isadore's love for and rejection by Yetta is his first acquaintance with "the facts of life," and these facts undermine Isadore's dogmatic position as a "machine" socialist. His hopeless affair also changes his political strategies and rhetoric: "He no longer made his appeal solely to reason; there was more red blood in his discourse, more pulsing life in his words. He had come to see that his hearers must feel as well as think. His Socialism had lost some of its sharp definitions, some of its logical simplicity, but it had come to bear a closer similitude to life" (272). This effect shows how Isadore's transformation is *bodily*, *political*, *and aesthetic* all at once, allowing him to achieve a holistic coherence that he once lacked—ironically by acknowledging the irreducible complexity of life. By contrast, Arnold never achieves such holistic coherence, largely because he is never able to dethrone Love as his one and only "faith." In the last pages,

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295 Yetta's commitment to "socialism for the babies," is often seen as a laughable part of a man imagining a female activist. However, it should be noted that Arnold of *A Man's World* also finds parenthood to be the most rewarding and reaffirming element of his life (so it is not limited to women). Arnold's personal commitment to working for the good of society happens a couple months into his stay at the settlement house when he is doing rounds with one of the female nurses in their tenement neighborhood. He witnesses the birth of a child to a family that already has six, all of whom live in a single unventilated room (103). Arnold realization that people don't just sink down to the "very dregs" but are "actually born there" causes him to adopt the cause of humanity as a moral imperative (103-104). A similar event is also one factor in the radical conversion of Billy, Ernest Poole's hero in *The Harbor* (so perhaps this is a recurring trope).

296 This representation of sex contrasts with that of the prostitution narratives addressed in Chapter Three, which poses sex as the ultimate form of alienation: alienation from your own body as product.

Suzanne is still a static, ageless ideal for him.[297] However, the formation of a politicized aesthetic[298] and its connections sexuality are still at the core of the formal and thematic concerns of *A Man's World.*

F. STRUGGLING FOR A "BETTER FORM"

Sinclair and Bullard wrote novels that demonstrated understandings of sexuality and socialism that were in transition. As my analysis thus far has shown, they were not as optimistic or radical in their representations of the emancipatory qualities of sexual freedom and equality as culture radicals. However, their writings do contribute to making sexuality visible as part of the everyday (the real the realism).[299]

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297 In the conclusion of the novel, Arnold notes that Suzanne married Mr. Stone, another socialist lawyer with whom she raised a family and forged an active political partnership. However, Arnold admits that "Mrs. Stone is a strange and rather unreal personality to me," and while "Mrs. Stone is getting matronly," he still holds onto "the other Suzanne, her of the slim, boyish form…the Suzanne who loved the poppies, the Suzanne of our earnest discussions, the Suzanne who was a prophetess, the enthusiastic apostle of the new faith, who like Deborah of old, sang songs of the great awakening to come, the Suzanne of Moret—whom I loved. She still lives. I cannot see that the passing years have in any way dimmed the vision…There are moments when she comes to me out of the mystery of dreams and, sitting on the floor, rests her head—her fearless head—on my knees. I run my fingers through her amazing hair and try to capture the fitful light of the fire, which glows there, now so golden, now so red…" (295-296).

298 I believe this is a specifically socialist aesthetic. Anarchists have their own politically-influenced aesthetic that is unbalanced and only partly "real." Walter has "no collective sense…no feeling for mass movements," and can only sympathize with them in an immediate individual or abstract level (*Comrade Yetta* 96-97). Similarly, Arnold's assessment of Ann's letters shows how he is conscious of how political commitments shape aesthetics and perception. He complains that she "gave no picture of Paris. She had no interest in inanimate things, no 'geographical sense.' I knew the names and idiosyncrasies of most of the laboratory assistants, she gave me no idea of Les Invalides, near which she lived. There was much about the inner consciousness of a German girl with whom she roomed, but I did not know whether the laboratory was in a business or residential section of the city…Although she wrote so much about people, the characters she described never seemed human to me. She did not understand the interpretive power of a background. Her outlook was extremely individualistic" (*A Man's World* 158-159).

299 While authors associated with the formation of U.S. Realism like William Dean Howells and Hamlin Garland were wary of including sex as part of the everyday life they were calling on writers to

A Man's World and *Love's Pilgrimage* explicitly and implicitly comments upon contemporary trends in literary and socialist arenas. Both novels were understood to be "modern" when they first appeared, distinct for their form and realism as well as their treatment of sexuality and politics.[300] Contemporary reviewers were impressed by how they discussed sexuality without sensationalism and socialism without propagandizing.[301] A reader who was moved by the novel wrote that Bullard's "special achievement…unique among American novelists," was to make radical ideas feel "familiar" and to not make his female free lover character into an "abomination," "superwoman" or "object of prurient inquiry" but rather simply a "Young Woman."[302] Indeed, the writer supposes that "a Methodist bishop or an Evanston matron of fifty could read 'A Man's World' without being shocked." While Sinclair's novel is more dramatic in its language, many reviewers noted its ability to represent sex without falling victim to what David Graham Phillips refers to as the hypocritically chaste Anglo-Saxon or salaciously filthy Continental modes of representing sexuality, which generate social perversity by making sex seem more titillating than it actually is by either suppressing

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represent, a new generation of Realists in the Progressive Era, including Frank Norris, Theodore Dreiser, and David Graham Phillips, demanded that a "realistic" representation of sexuality be a central project of modern authors. See Donald Pizer's anthology, *Documents of American Realism and Naturalism*, Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois UP, 1998, pp. 3-16, 172-178.

300 See reviews in *The Smart Set*, Vol. 34, No. 4 (August 1911), pp. 156, and *The Coming Nation*, Vol. VI, No. 66 (December 1912), pg. 11.

301 Just as many critics the astonishing "truthfulness" of Love's Pilgrimage with a muting of Sinclair's political aims, there was a debate among contemporary reviewers with reference to *Comrade Yetta* about whether the "humanness" of the novel compromised its presumed political agenda, with some critics arguing that it is "altogether…too human" to be a "successful 'problem novel'" (e.g., *The American Review of Reviews*, Vol. 47, (Jan – June 1913), pp. 630) and others insisting, "best of all, he presents both sides as real human beings. But no matter how he presents them, no matter how little he says of 'capitalism,' that word is the half-visible water-mark on every page of the book" (Sinclair Lewis, "Relation of the Novel to the Present Social Unrest," *The Bookman*, Vol. 40 (Sept 1914 – Feb 1915): 285).

302 Letter from Lucian Cary in *The Coming Nation*, Vol. VI, No. 66 (December 1912): 11.

or over-emphasizing its delights (x).[303] As one review notes of *Love's Pilgrimage*, "the story passes into a carnal frankness reminiscent of Maupassant or Balzac, yet even in its most erotic passages it is clean and ingenuous."[304] Resonating with Phillips' call to represent sex "fearlessly and honestly," poet Edwin Markham claims of the novel, "Its flame-like purity will repel, rather than attract, the sensationalist."[305]

For Greenwich Village intellectuals, sexual modernism was not just about altering their sexual practices but also articulating alternative models of sexuality and bringing sexuality into public conversations. As Stansell points out, "sex talk" was as important as sex itself.[306] Both Sinclair and Bullard do just this in their novels in ways that help to refigure the terrain of realism and socialism. Ultimately, they argue that articulating sexuality is a literary project and political strategy that will contribute to radical social transformation. In doing so, they differentiate their understanding of sexuality from the language of sex education (which was emerging in response to the White Slavery Scare and the growing investment in social hygiene) and scientific socialism (which was informed by the dominant discourses of the social sciences). Importantly, in the work of both authors, these projects of articulation take place in dialogues between men and women, offering an alternative to the types of individualist, masculinist forms of authority that are problematized in all three novels.

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303 David Graham Phillips was a muckraker and novelist who wrote many a novel about New Women. The quote is from his preface to one such novel, *Susan Lenox* (1917), "Before the Curtain" (ix-xi). These opposite approaches to the representation of sex are "twin sisters of the same horrid mother" for Phillips who insists they are "false to nature, false to true morality, [and] propagandist of indecent emotions disguised as idealism." His solution is to "treat the sex question as you would any other question," that is, not "reverently" or "rakishly" but "naturally" (x).

304 Review in *Current Literature*, Vol. 51, (1911):108.

305 Quoted from *The New York American* in the above *Current Literature* review.

306 See her chapter, "Talking about Sex" (273 – 308).

The implicit literary framework of *Love's Pilgrimage* suggests its aesthetic is self-consciously feminist. The couple's aliases help elucidate Sinclair's literary investments, asking the reader to read the novel with and against an established literary canon. The names are drawn from characters that originally appear in Virgil's pastoral *Eclogues* and were later taken up by John Milton in "L'Allegro" and Matthew Arnold in his pastoral elegy, "Thyrsis." They refer to two male shepherd characters who enter into a singing contest. The allusion is striking, then, because it is far from a typical romantic trope—the characters are both men, equals, and artist figures who belong to a masculinist lineage of canon formation.[307] Corydon's gender reassignment signals the changing sexual conventions that underlie new values and aesthetics. Furthermore, Thyrsis (identified with Upton) is the losing competitor in every iteration of the story, suggesting the female Corydon is the artist of the future.

Generally, all of the Corydon and Thyrsis poems are part of various Western epic traditions, which suggests an aesthetic genealogy for the novel and its function as the modern version. Matthew Arnold's "Thyrsis"—the last poem to be discussed in the novel and the first to spark Sinclair's interest in the allusion—is an elegy for a Romantic poet, which further supports the reading of Corydon as the emerging modern poet. From the beginning of *Love's Pilgrimage*, sexuality is in fact conflated with reality and literary realism set against Romanticism. When Thyrsis is introduced to sex for the first time through a classmate, it is described as a naïf's encounter with reality, as a "most appalling revelation" that "opened quite a new vista of life's possibilities" wherein he realizes "there was a great deal in the world that was not found in the poetry of Tennyson and Longfellow" (24-25). The novel strives to represent

307 As the names are derived from a comparatively brief scene of Virgil's, it is really a fairly esoteric reference, an allusion that establishes the erudition of the writer perhaps more than a shared cultural reference with the reader.

this "new vista of life's possibilities," but it is an aesthetic-in-formation. A contemporary critic suggests as much when he notes, "No doubt the very formlessness of the novel, with its gratuitous comments, may be the author's best claim to its truth, but there is no logic in a method that purposely uses obstetrical detail on one page and an idealistic selection on another" (550).[308] This kind of juxtaposition seems to be precisely the point of the novel, to illustrate a changing conception of reality and art.

Sinclair approached the modern "obstetrical detail" in the narrative with such frankness that he seems to have been disappointed that the novel did not get censored. He thought Corydon's birth scene was particularly worthy of Comstockian suppression.[309] Through the novel's account of the childbirth scene (which takes up a harrowing twenty pages and provides extremely vivid description of Corydon's body in labor)[310], Thyrsis seems to formulate a new political aesthetic. Reflecting upon what he just observed, Thyrsis is disgusted that "these things were forbidden; these mighty facts of child-birth, of life-creation—they might not be spoken about! They must be kept hidden, veiled with mystery—if one wished to refer to them, he must employ metaphors and polite evasions" (285). Sinclair's writing of the scene corresponds with a new feminist-socialist ethic that Thrysis develops in witnessing it:

> Some day the world would hear about it—some day the world would think about it! Some day people would behold life—would realize what it was and

308 George Middleton in *The Bookman*, Vol.33 (1911): 549-550.

309 See Sinclair's *Autobiography*, 84-85.

310 See pages 267-287. To give a couple examples, he describes how, "the spasms came, one after another, relentless, unceasing, inevitable—each trooping upon the heels of the last; they were uncounted—uncountable—piling upon one another like waves upon the sea, like the gusts of a raging storm…The agony would flame up in her, he would see her body turn rigid, her face flush scarlet, her teeth become set and her gums fleshed. The muscles would stand out in her cheeks, the perspiration start upon her forehead" (275). Later, he describes the head beginning to crown, "through the horrible gaping wound showed a little patch, the size of a dollar—purplish black, palpitating, starting forward when the crises shook the mother" (280).

> what it meant. They did not realize it now—else how could it be that women, who bore the race with so much pain and sorrow, should be drudges and slaves, or the ornaments and playthings of men? Else how could it be that life, which cost such a fearful price, should be so cheap upon the earth? For every man that lived and walked alive, some woman had had to bear this agony; and yet men were pent up in mines and sweatshops, they were ground up in accidents in factories and mills—nay, worse than that, were dressed up in gaudy uniforms, and armed with rifles and machine-guns, and marched out to slaughter each other by tens and hundreds of thousands! (286)

The task of making people realize the "mighty facts" of "life-creation" here is a literary project rather than a scientific reform. Indeed, the scene records the ultimate alienation of "labor": If women are cut off from their own bodies and children, their oppression is compounded by language being alienated from reality. It is not surprising, then, that the trauma of giving birth becomes the dominant trope for understanding literary labor in the text.[311]

If witnessing the female body in trauma informs his aesthetic, Sinclair claims that there was also a more direct female influence on his writing in that his wife was apparently involved in the novel's composition process. In his *Autobiography*, wherein he still uses the names Corydon and Thyrsis to refer to Meta and himself, he seems to almost ruefully recall her contributions to the text, claiming he in fact privileged her voice over his own because he felt guilty over his social advantages:

> In writing the book, I told the story as the girl wanted it told. If it seemed to her that the manuscript failed to give a sufficiently vivid account of the hardheadedness and unreasonableness of Thyrsis, I would say, 'You write it the way it ought to be.' So Corydon would write a paragraph, or maybe a page or a scene, and in it would go. I was so sorry for the fate of women that I found it hard to contend with them. (75-76)

This collaboration is suggested in the narrative itself in a series of italicized interludes that track a day wherein the now-estranged couple meet as friends in the bucolic spot where they fell in love ten years before. These framing episodes detail their discussions over the course of

311 See for instance, pages 140, 179, 241, 307, 320, 367, 369, 413, 466.

day, which revolve around writing and reading the various literary texts by Virgil, Milton, and Arnold to which their names (Thyrsis and Corydon) allude and interpreting them through their own life experiences. Though Sinclair's tone in the *Autobiography* is retrospectively dismissive,[312] it is important that at the time he conceived of the novel as a collaborative project and that the manuscript was a constant topic of dialogue at the end of their marriage.[313]

Indeed, in the narrative itself, he and Corydon talk through *everything*. For instance, after their experiment in free love fails, they spend all night discussing it: "all through supper they talked about this breathless event. Afterwards they sat in the twilight, upon the porch, and threshed it out in its every aspect"—not the reaction we might expect from a couple faced with infidelity (660). Whereas the authorities of modern love—sexologists and psychoanalysts—are all men, these conversations about sex take place in dialogues between men and women, and are posed as the catalyst for a revolutionary aesthetic of the future.

Such dialogues, then, are at the heart of a developing socialist aesthetic and philosophy. Many critics suggest that *Love's Pilgrimage* evidences a developing aesthetic practice or maturation in Sinclair's artistry. For instance, Reed Whittemore claims that the novel "had the merit of being a gesture away from propaganda and toward literary spaciousness" (106). Since it features at least as many intellectual asides about Marxism as *The Jungle* along with a practical reading guide that introduces and comments upon those authors who had become socialist standards: Marx and Engels, Morgan, Kautsky, Bebel, Carpenter, Gilman, Veblen, etc,

312 It should also be noted that Sinclair of course had the last word and took authorial credit, so the dialogic format is more of a pretense of equality.

313 Their cooperation on this project actually contributed to U.S. courts denying their divorce suit since apparently it was seen as "collusion" between the plaintiff and defendant. The law at the time, then, specifically prohibited what Sinclair was trying to achieve in manuscript, that is, writing "a novel about a modern marriage that would show the possibility of a couple agreeing to part, and still remaining friends" (*Autobiography* 164).

it seems that the novel's "gesture away from propaganda" does not mean that it is any less socialist but rather that its socialism is more literary.[314] What perhaps makes it seem less "party line" is how deeply the ongoing personal and political development of the characters are intertwined—it is a *process* rather than a sudden transformation like the mythic moment of conversion at the end of *The Jungle*. Pittenger notes how, "In socialist novels and autobiographies, conversion to scientific socialism traditionally resolves contradictions and banishes malaise," but this is not the case in *Love's Pilgrimage* (or Bullard's novels) wherein socialist ideology is never a finished product—instead, the characters are constantly struggling to reshape their lives via socialism and vice versa, but the difficulties and contradictions are never overcome (217). Similarly, while Jurgis loses his voice at the end of *The Jungle* (displaced by speeches given by socialist authorities amidst a local election), Thyrsis and Corydon use what they have learned to carry on a dialogue that continues to reshape their relationship and home life. As such, the novel actively revises previous socialist and romantic literary conventions to offer a more complex view of socialism in theory and practice.

Like *Love's Pilgrimage*, *A Man's World* explicitly and implicitly comments upon contemporary trends in literary and socialist arenas. The novel has been credited by Pittenger as being the most formally sophisticated and successfully realist texts in the early socialist canon (213-214). However, what impresses Pittenger most about the novel is its reflexivity or highly self-conscious, modern flair. I agree that Bullard certainly seems to be self-consciously commenting upon aesthetic and political discourses, but with two caveats. For one, Arnold does not seem to be wholeheartedly embracing his aesthetic of fragmentation and contingency or

314 Sinclair offers a detailed account of Thyrsis's "course of reading in Socialism" on pp.526-539 and 556-563. The text also features him arguing socialism to a missionary (546-554), at a high-society dinner (573-581), and with Corydon's lover (649-653).

identifying it as inherent to human experience. Secondly, the representation of sexuality and modern love seem to be Bullard's primary vehicles for this commentary.

A Man's World does indeed participate and intervene in the realist literary movement, which initially distinguished itself as study of the common man (against romantic heroes). James Nagel, speaking of the progenitors of American realism, describes their literature as "fundamentally democratic, dealing with average characters in mundane situations" (30). Of course, who or what counted as "average," "mundane," or "ordinary" was a highly contentious and ideologically-fraught issue with sometimes less than democratic implications. As June Howard points out, realist writings "*produce* rather than *transcribe*" reality (14), often in ways that seek to "consolidate the hegemony of the middle classes" and "ensure the persistence of patriarchal and nativist ideologies" (Den Tandt 13). Realists' "aesthetic of the common," then, could be understood as a means to "construct a homogeneous and coherent social reality," a reality that is orderly and "knowable" in the face of an increasingly heterogeneous, fragmented, and unrepresentable social totality (Kaplan 21). Arnold of *A Man's World* explicitly situates his project within the discourse of the "common," indentifying his purpose for writing the account of his life as being a guide book for young men who anticipate leading "ordinary" rather than exceptional lives.[315] Furthermore, Bullard's choice of title and protagonist in the middle-class professional Arnold Whitman (whose surname literally means "white man") seem to directly implicate the novel as performing exactly the kind of problematic ideological work criticized by scholars such as Howard, Den Tandt, and Kaplan. Besides being a white male professional, Arnold's occupation as a probation officer directly aligns him with the regulatory practices of

315 Though Arnold is not a famous or heroic figure, the many exceptional circumstances in his life make it difficult to view his character as "average." Perhaps part of Bullard's project is constructing the politically-engaged reformists and revolutionists as commonplace rather than marginal or aberrant personalities.

surveillance that Mark Seltzer has argued inhere in realist aesthetics. On the other hand, Bullard's choices put what is often assumed to be ordinary itself on display, readily questioning the norm instead of merely reinforcing it. In particular, the novel's representation of sexuality is actively engaged with revising the aesthetic and implications of the common.

At the turn of the century, sexuality became an increasing factor in critical debates about the purview of realism and the reality it projected.[316] As previously described, *A Man's World* puts sexual drives and desires, conflicts and relationships on center stage. The narrative makes both beliefs about and practices associated with sexuality key aspects of character development. In doing so, Bullard constructs sexual expression as commonplace, and *this association renders the common as a site of producing ambiguity instead of order.* As an illustration, Arnold goes to meet Ann at her house, determined to give her a high-sounding speech that would end an affair that he feels is morally wrong. However, when he confronts the scene of her merrily cooking dinner while her mother and nephew gather at the table and engage him in small talk, he is unable to complete his speech, amazed by how "everyday" it is rather than the dire, life-or-death scenario he imagined it to be (163).

The impossibility of "managing" or bringing order to reality is also dramatized by the novel's point of view. Departing from the omniscient, third-person perspective characteristic of the majority of realist, naturalist, and socialist novels,[317] the story is told in first person, from Arnold's perspective. Arnold is constantly highlighting the subjective, partial nature of his

316 "Calverton [in his 1922 study, *Sex Expression in Literature*] blames the lingering force of sex repression in literature on those 'vestigial Howellsians' who follow Comstock's censoring of sexually expressive books" (Bauer 142). Calverton's evolutionary reference to a residual structure or obsolete organ still present but nonfunctional adopts the scientific tone of twentieth-century realists.

317 Including *Yetta.* Pittenger reads Bullard's reversion to third person as a step backward in aesthetic and theoretical sophistication, but it may be that the first person gets at the limitations of Arnold's more individualistic perspective.

narrative, emphasizing his limitations rather than his authority over the material.[318] Previous socialist novelists such as Reginald Wright Kauffman readily took up Zola's formulation of the author as experimenter and social scientist who records and interprets the world with the intent to control or bring order to it.[319] Thus, the author's positivistic vision records a reality with a prescriptive moral logic attached.[320] In contrast to this "demystifactory, documentary gaze" (Den Tandt 17), Arnold's (and by extension, Bullard's) understanding of realism is not so much about acute, objective sight as it is about an affective, obstructed vision. Images of poverty in particular confront Arnold with his own powerlessness instead of mastery over reality, impressing themselves upon his consciousness and creating a barrier to beauty: "The vision of a sunken cheeked, tuberculosis ridden pauper would always rise between me and the beauty of the sunset. A crowd of hurrying ghosts—the ghosts of the slaughtered babies—would follow me everywhere, crying, 'Coward,' if I ran away. The slums had taken me captive" (105).

Bullard pointedly has Arnold echo Zola in identifying his life as an "*experiment* in ethics," but by the time he finishes his autobiography, he acknowledges that his experiment has "failed" since he is no closer to "distinguish[ing] right from wrong today, than when [he] was a boy in school" (308). Thus, Arnold the white male professional openly disavows any sort of mastery. Nor can he get fully "outside" of his immediate reality to see the solutions. He is well aware of

318 As Floyd Dell puts it in his review, Bullard "does not pretend to be an innocent bystander" in *The Coming Nation*, Vol. VI, no. 66 (Dec 1912), pp.11.

319 See "The Novel as Social Science" by Emile Zola, pgs. 270-289 in *The Modern Tradition.*

320 Realism is traditionally associated with a "demystifactory, documentary gaze," with acute and authoritative vision (DenTandt 17). As Mark Seltzer points out the infinitive, "to see" is the "dominant verb in realist texts" as eyes are the privileged organ of cognition (111).

his positionality, of his inability to escape "doctrines that would influence him." Hence, the narrative is meditative, self-conscious, and fragmentary.[321]

The story is told in a roughly chronological manner but is disjointed and episodic, shifting between recollections from his childhood, personal life and work experience while acknowledging the gaps and vagaries of memory. Pittenger enthusiastically sees this aesthetic as theoretically nuanced, anticipating poststructuralism: "When Bullard explains to the reader that there can be no 'literary unity' in an autobiography, he means that life itself, like social development, lacks a unified, predictable, and harmonious course" (216). However, while he is self-conscious about this fragmentary, modern aesthetic, Arnold himself is far from embracing or endorsing it. Instead, he presents it as an artistic compromise, necessitated by the gaps between material conditions and literary production. Since literature has yet to be able to "unite the artistic form with an impression of actuality," his "choice is for reality rather than art" (110). Thus, he sees the form of his story as a product of specific historical conditions, positing that the disunities and gaps it traces between his ideals and lived experience are not fundamental to the human condition. In fact, the most damning thing for Arnold in his relationship with Ann is how it necessitates an aesthetic disunity in his narrative: the separation of representations of his work life and his sex life, a gap that Yetta notably closes (171). Arnold is optimistic by the end that future generations (as anticipated in Marie and

321 In the opening chapter, Arnold notes how his book does not follow a "traditional 'literary form,'" nor does it "have a definite beginning, end, or sense of 'unity'" (1). He returns to the last of these issues at the beginning of Book IV, explaining how "literary unity" can only be "secured…at the expense of all sense of reality," and thus he writes his life in the "episodal" manner in which he experienced it where the "facts of life are related only de post facto" and "the simplest of us is a multiple personality, can be described only partially from any point of view" (109-110).

William) will be able to integrate these two elements of concrete experience in a more satisfying manner.

He learns to embrace the frustrating contingency of life without cynicism or bitterness, instead seeing how he and his generation have helped contribute "a little increment of wisdom…to the race" and "made great strides in [the] diagnosis" of society's ills, even if they have been unable to cure them (310-311). Ultimately, the nonpartisan Arnold concludes that his failure might be wrapped up in the individualistic nature of his experiment, "in trying to find the truth for [him]self alone" (310). He marvels with reference to the generation represented by Marie and Billy: "How much better equipped they are than we were, *how much clearer they see*!...if I wish to live on…it is to watch these youngsters in their *struggle for the better form*" (my emphasis 311). The choice of the word "form" here evokes both the aesthetic and social concerns of the text. Notably, though the text expresses a desire for order and coherence, it also locates the conditions of their possibility not in the authority of the singular white man but rather in social collaboration across difference, that is, in the cooperation between Billy and Marie. If the novel suggests that future generations will be better able to "direct" reality towards socialism and art toward a unified aesthetic through working together, it also implies that their ability to direct these advances will increase in proportion to their ability to realize the reality of love.[322]

If some critics are impressed by Bullard's self-conscious acknowledgement of his crises of representation, of his inability to express certain experiences and ideas, they often miss that he is not thereby insisting that such experiences and ideas are fundamentally resistant to

322 Similarly, in *Love's Pilgrimage*, Corydon's "wholeness," her integration of mind, body, and soul, seems to qualify her to be a better modern "artist"—the implication that because she is not subject to the same contradictions as Thyrsis, she is likewise not bound to the type of fragmentariness and formlessness that characterizes his aesthetic.

representation. In both *A Man's World* and *Comrade Yetta*, it is not assumed that the reality of sex or love is inarticulable (an assumption that theorists and critics such as Foucault and Armstrong have seen as contributing to a problematic version of privatized liberal personhood).[323] Instead of insisting upon its inarticulability, Bullard suggests that—to our grave detriment—it has yet to be sufficiently articulated. Finding a language to better express our sexual desires and relations is in fact essential to social progress, a key to bringing about socialist futures.

This is the explicit conversation that Yetta and Isadore have as they conclude their honeymoon. Bullard notes that the discussion is a difficult one because "their vocabulary *à deux* had many lacunae" (429). Many socialist and nonsocialist authors, especially in the wake of the White Slavery Scare, identified "sex ignorance" as one of the greatest threats to civilization. This lack of knowledge about one's own body mirrors and personalizes the type of false consciousness projected onto the masses. Bullard participates in this discourse, but goes further to suggest that sex ignorance is more than just not knowing the scientific facts related to the body. "What bothers me," Yetta says, "is that I was ignorant…I knew about the physiology of love, but that is only so very little of it. I'd read Forel; everybody says that is the best book on sex. But that did not tell me…Why did not someone tell me the truth?" (429-430). Arnold has a similarly frustrating experience with a sex education book, complaining that it did not properly "equip him for manhood" (52).[324] Isadore responds that "It isn't so much a question of courage as it is of ability…The reality can't be expressed in scientific

323 See Nancy Armstrong's *Desire in Domestic Fiction* (13).

324 In a strange comparison, Arnold likens sex as described in sex ed books to a "printing press" as described by a manual wherein the technical and mechanical functions of the machine are privileged while its more important socioeconomic and cultural significances are omitted (51).

language—and the gutter words are false when you talk of love" (431). He explains that love and sex have changed evolutionarily and culturally over time as humans have gained "consciousness" of themselves, and thus he is sure that "as we begin to get used to this startlingly new concept of love, we'll develop the words to express it. It's too big a task to be accomplished by one brain or one generation" (432). The challenge, then, to scientific socialism is to account for this real, human dimension of experience, a struggle at the level of the body and language. It is task that is first and foremost *literary* rather than scientific. Moreover, it situates both sexuality and socialism as an ongoing, unfinished process of articulation, *a dialogue that happens between sexes.* This perspective challenges the rhetoric of male-dominated scientific socialism and sex education and their totalizing truth claims about economic and sexual realities.

Yetta implies in her very first, spontaneous political speech, how important a socialist culture is to maintaining a strong labor movement and how experiences need to be *articulated* in order to be politically persuasive: "What right have I got to be free? I forgot all about it. I ain't been vigilant. *Nobody's talked to me about liberty* since my father died…I'm a speeder in my shop. I'm sorry. I didn't think about it. *Nobody ever told me what it meant before*…I can't fight much. I don't know how. I guess that's the real trouble—we're not afraid—only we don't know. I ain't got no education" (my emphasis, 83). Putting human experience into language often has problematic normative and hegemonic functions, but posing sex as inarticulable does not necessarily offer a viable form of resistance. Posing sex as "inexpressible" reinforces its status as prelinguistic/primordial/natural and private/individual. Articulating sex openly politicizes it, laying bare its social and public dimensions. In this context, it is intended to be a

humanist project, productive of human freedom and solidarity rather than oppression.[325] Sinclair and Bullard evidenced a desire, to use V.F. Calverton's later formulation, to "democratize the language of sex," and a belief that doing so would mean "a liberation of the masses" (Bauer 7). Of course, if both Sinclair's and Bullard's works undermine a hegemonic male authority, relocating it in the heterosexual couple still does much to reinforce the dominant social order. Their novels, then, also beg attention to how the language of sex is spoken and who is allowed to speak it, to keep expanding the conversation beyond a monologue or even dialogue in order to further its democratic potential.

G. CONCLUSION

Following the White Slavery Scare wherein sexuality had been dragged into the public spotlight, there was a struggle over sexuality that could either further politicize or "(re)depoliticize"[326] it. Sinclair's and Bullard's novels—though their formulas are more complicated than direct correlations between sexual emancipation and political equality or social freedom—consistently do the former and do it in the service of a "living" socialist politics. However, their work anticipated a cultural shift that largely broke down the connection between sexual modernism and radical political movements. Yetta's "finding herself" through sexual intercourse rather than political discourse corresponds to what Dale

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325 This stance on pleasure is influenced by Elaine Scarry's work in *The Body in Pain*, in which she argues for the struggle to articulate and communicate pain as part of a vital, progressive, humanist agenda. Bullard's humanist project of articulating sex is compromised by its associations with compulsory heterosexuality. Pamela Haag rightly notes how the increased public visibility of sex and women's sexual freedom in the Progressive era corresponded with a more aggressive heterosexual imperative (*Consent*, Chapter 5).

326 This is Nancy Fraser's term. See for instance, her article, "Struggle over Needs: Outline of a Socialist-Feminist Critical Theory of Late-Capitalist Political Culture," in *Women, the State, and Welfare: Historical and Theoretical Perspectives*, Ed. Linda Gordon, (Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1990): 205-231.

Bauer and Pamela Haag have identified as a shift from the cultural emphasis on self-expression to sex-expression as the most fundamental assertion of personhood. This change constituted a cultural shift from sentimentality to sexuality, from desexualized, liberal, autonomous subjects to a subject constituted privately, primarily through sex, passion, and intimacy. Though empowering in some respects to women, the shift to sex expression had many political shortcomings visible in the aftermath of the feminist socialism in the 1910s.[327]

While the work of feminist socialists had the potential to articulate a more dialectical understanding of socialism, it sometimes only inverted the orthodox Marxist privileging of class over sex. Hence, another danger presented by such "lifestyle radicalism" was the tendency for socialists' political life to retreat into the personal as "sex power became a mode of retrenchment from social change and liberation" (Bauer 106). Ultimately, the work of feminist socialists could be seen as contributing to the formation of a dominant construction of sexuality seemingly stripped of politics wherein love offered the illusion of transcendence above rather than resistance to capitalism.[328]

Unfortunately, by the end of WWI, the Socialist Party and sex radicalism had parted ways again. The SP, divided by its pacifist stance, dropped its growing focus on the woman question and sex problem in favor of war and imperialism. Margaret Sanger, who had been active in her New York Local's Women's Committee in the early 1910s and received considerable support from socialists, took her Birth Control movement elsewhere to get "respectable" backing from non-radical funders (Buhle 273). The mainstreaming of The Birth

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327 For instance, besides the accompanying compulsory heterosexuality, it meant, as Foucault observed earlier, that sexuality became conflated with and a primary facet of identity—something you are rather than something you do. Dale Bauer notes how figuring sexuality as an identity was encouraged in the U.S. by its early associations with particular races and classes (e.g. African Americans and lower-class women) (141).

328 See Haag 166-167.

Control Movement presaged the popular adoption of many aspects of the modern sexuality heralded by the Greenwich Village milieu. By the 1920s, the recognition of female sexual desires across classes and outside of marriage (though not outside a rigorous heterosexual imperative) had gone mainstream. Sexuality had become a "basic expression of personal rights" (Simmons 73), but in a way that privatized it and constructed it as a therapeutic domain outside of the modern market and industry, undermining the collectivist principles of radical movements. Sexual modernization, then, "granted women freedoms to seek fulfillment but only within the 'boundaries of their sexuality'" (Haag 163).

The literary bohemians, more successful in enacting cultural than economic transformation, had themselves mostly retreated from participation in mass politics.[329] Many of them left the SP upon the U.S. entrance into WWI when the Party saw a sizeable defection of its public intellectuals and artists for either the Communist Party or no party. Such "retrenchment" from radical politics is the potential danger latent in characters like Corydon and Yetta, whose ultimate self-realization is tied to sex rather than collective action. Pre-war socialists' novels' focus on heterosexuality and the sex problem is so compulsive that workplace militancy is just a part of the exposition. The most dramatic transformations take place in romantic pairs rather than with the masses—female solidarity in particular is always lost or compromised by the end.[330]

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329 Arthur Bullard and Upton Sinclair both left the SP due to their stance on WWI but neither got out of politics. While Bullard quickly took a government position as head of the U.S. State Department in Russia, eventually helping to found the Committee on Public Information with another former socialist, Walter Lippmann, Sinclair quickly returned to the Party and was one of the few socialists who continued to write novels throughout the 1920s in spite of massive government suppression due to the Red Scare. Sinclair, though he remained committed to "sex equality" took a considerable step away from "sex radicalism" in the remainder of his work and life.

330 Hapke makes a related critique of Bullard: "unsure of how to depict the romantic and workplace experiences of sisters in militance once the excitement has died down," he turns, "the novel into a tract on Socialist woman as helpmeet" (152).

Meanwhile, the Party—far from adopting a vision of socialism that instrumentalized their earlier coalition-style of politics to see ideology as a living thing—responded to the interventions of Greenwich Village intellectuals by cracking down on ideological multiplicity. They wrote resolutions condemning "free lance" socialists, issued official certificates to identify the Party's "authorized" speakers, and insisted all literature, lesson plans, and speeches be approved by state or national Executive Committees.[331] Moreover, they telescoped their political strategy to focus almost exclusively on electoral politics, expelling whole branches of the Party for their participation in direct action, militant labor uprisings, or "sabotage" in a way that weakened the SP and alienated much of its working-class constituency (Weinstein 51-70). These changes corresponded to structural shifts in their literary production. Whereas previously the Party had intentionally refrained from designating any publication or publisher as its authorized political voice, in the 1910s, the state and national levels of the SP created an official Party paper and press.[332]

The work of Bullard and Sinclair, then, marks a moment in which there was a temporary and productive intersection between socialism and feminism for men and women. Their novels and politicized representations of sexuality begin probing the promises and limitations of this intersection, but, unfortunately instead of anticipating a more progressive culture in which sexual freedom and economic equality were articulated in increasingly interconnected ways, they portend another re-separation of sexuality and economics.

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331 See Socialist Party (U.S. and Local New York) Minutes; Socialist Collections 1872-1956; R7124/reels 9-10; Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, Elmer Holmes Bobst Library, New York University Libraries.

332 See "Report of Press Committee to National Committee in Session May 10th, 1914"; Socialist Party Ephemera; Box 1, Folder 13; Socialist Collections 1872-1956; Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, Elmer Holmes Bobst Library, New York University Libraries.

VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAY

It was through Walter Rideout's *The Radical Novel in the United States, 1900 – 1954* (1956) that I was first introduced to the body of materials addressed in this dissertation, and it is also to this work that I am indebted for my initial bibliography. Rideout compiled—over fifty year ago— one of most thorough bibliographies to date of radical novels from the first half of the twentieth century in the U.S. However, his list was incomplete and often arbitrary in its selections (why Joseph Medill Patterson but not Theresa Malkiel or Hutchins Hapgood?, why Abraham Cahan's *The Rise of David Levinsky* but not *The White Terror and the Red* or Upton Sinclair's *King Coal* but not *Love's Pilgrimage*?). Rideout's selections and assessments have guided the scant amount of criticism available on Progressive-era novels written by socialists, most of which focus on the same few works. Besides reading all of Rideout's list, I have sought to supplement it by searching out other works by the authors that he features as well as by scouring advertisements and reviews for novels in the backs of the novels I knew about and in related periodicals. My ability to locate and read SP novels has been greatly enhanced by the increasing digitization of texts that are in the public domain on sites such as Internet Archive and Google Books.

When I initially started this project, I defined my body of materials as "radical" novels of the Progressive era. Upon being convinced of the unproductive slipperiness of this definition, I thought to narrow and refine the scope of my research to novels written by members of the Socialist Party of America during the Progressive era without making any

particular claims as to the political position espoused by the novels themselves. Little did I know that, though such a designation made my guidelines at once more concrete, it did not always significantly lessen the time I spent figuring out if a particular novel fulfilled them. That is, it was definitely not so easy as I had supposed to verify whether or not any given author was indeed a Party member. As it turns out, membership in the early days of the SP was conducted through a stamp system wherein members paid monthly dues to their Locals, receiving stamps for their membership cards when they paid and letting their membership lapse when they did not. No standardized records were kept of who was a member at any given time at the Local or National level. Though there were plenty of records of who was a Party leader or delegate at any time, of all the novelists, only Theresa Malkiel seems to have played any significant part in the administration of her Local. Moreover, the work of many of the authors in question was published by mainstream presses with no specific political affiliation. In the absence of a centralized and definitive record, I have had to find other means to verify authors' standing. For the majority of cases, the authors themselves publicized their membership in their novels or other related writings. Sometimes I have relied on reviews to "out" the authors as socialists or on histories that contain biographical information. For a couple authors, it has been amusingly difficult to substantiate my hunch that they were members of the SP. My favorite example is Charlotte Teller whose novel *The Cage* contains no explicit references to socialism and what little biographical information that is available on her is chiefly concerned with Mark Twain's (scandalous) patronage of her work. I quite by chance happened to find the corroboration that I was seeking in a footnote to a collection of Charles Chesnutt's letters that discloses her reply to Chesnutt in which she explains to him that as a

socialist, she believes "that the wage slavery of the white man is not far less disgraceful than the old slavery of the black."[333]

This bibliography is not by any means exhaustive. My list of primary sources constitutes only those fifty seven novels located and read for this research. Jack London alone wrote fifteen other novels that I did not consider for this project.[334] It is my intention to keep expanding this bibliography and providing public access to information about and links to each novel on a dedicated wiki site.

333 Footnote 2, Page 39, *An Exemplary Citizen: Letter of Charles Chesnutt, 1906 – 1932* (Ed. by Jesse S. Crisler, Robert C. Leitz, III, and Joseph R. McElrath, Jr. Palo Alto: Stanford UP, 2002).

334 Jack London published 15 other novels from 1901-1916, when he resigned from the SP and died, including: *A Daughter of the Snows* (1902), *The Cruise of the Dazzler* (1902), *The Call of the Wild (1903)*, *The Sea Wolf* (1904), *The Game* (1905), *White Fang (1906)*, *Before Adam* (1907), *Burning Daylight* (1910), *Adventure* (1911), *The Abysmal Brute* (1913), *John Barleycorn* (1913), *The Mutiny of the Elsinore* (1914), *The Scarlet Plague* (1915), *The Star Rover* (1915), and *The Little Lady of the Big House* (1916).

B. CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF NOVELS WRITTEN BY MEMBERS OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF AMERICA, 1901 – 1917

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1903

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Scudder, Vida. *A Listener in Babel.* Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co, 1903.
Swift, Morrison. *The Monarch Billionaire.* New York: J.S. Ogilvie Publishing Co, 1903.

1904

Raymond, Walter Marion. *Rebels of the New South.* Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Co, 1904.

1905

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Cahan, Abraham. *The White Terror and the Red: A Novel of Revolutionary Russia.* New York: A.S. Barnes & Co, 1905.
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1906

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1907

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1913

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1916

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